

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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War under the floor p. 16

Shifting visions of the
Christian life ... p. 6

59th year of publication

ADSCAM — or how to make millions of Canadian citizens love Canada

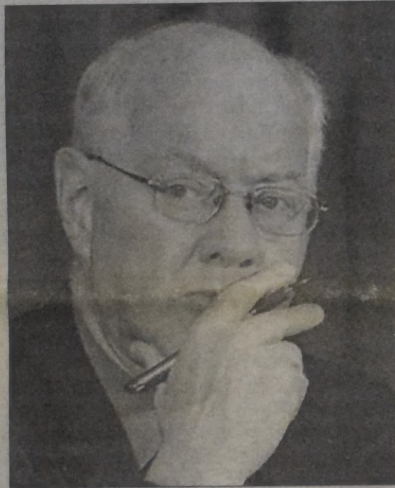
Harry der Nederlanden

Canadian politics has been plagued with minor scandals in which public monies and federal contracts end up benefiting most the friends and relatives of those in power. In recent memory, there was Chretien and his hometown golf course, Mulroney and — but who remembers them anymore?

Canadians are either a forgiving lot or an apathetic flock happy to be fleeced. We've begun to expect that not everything will be entirely on the up-and-up when public funds are spent. The money sticks here and there enroute to its destination — the public good. Political patronage, cronyism, influence peddling, kickbacks, pork-barrel politics — these are just features of the political landscape, just as cow pies are part of a farm scene.

With the recent revelations of Liberal management of sponsorship funds, however, the picture emerging is a tad nastier than the usual political manure. After the first revelations about how little we got for the money spent promoting Canada in one of our favorite provinces, it was still possible to interpret it as a mix of sloppiness, incompetence, arrogance, laziness, extravagance and other non-venal sins. After the testimony of Jean Brault, Jacques Corriveau, Luc Lemay and Alain Renaud, journalists invariably began describing the machinations in terms of plots from mafia movies.

Editors of newspapers that support the Liberals are right in cautioning us that we should not assume that Brault is telling the truth, for there's a lot of contradictory testimony and lots of denials. However muddy the picture and however tangled the plot, a picture is beginning to



Gomery

emerge, however, that forces us to take back the charge of incompetence. For a number of years these men, pillars of society, were very competently plundering the public purse.

Reading the transcripts of their stories, one almost begins to feel sorry for these wheeler-dealers. The way they tell the story, they didn't set out to become crooks — they were almost forced into it by the government. Chretien dismissed the whole inquiry as

a disproportionate fuss about a few rotten apples which you find anywhere. Listening to the testimony of Brault and Lemay, however, the impression emerges that conditions created by the Liberal government made the rot almost inevitable. Bucketfuls of cash handed out without any accountability breed corruption as surely as a barnyard breeds flies.

Here are a few examples of what the inquiry was told.

Brault testified that at different times he was pressured or asked to put men on the payroll of his company Groupaction who did not work for him but for the Liberal Party. He paid Serge Gosselin \$84,000 for a year and later John

Welch \$97,000. Gosselin denied the allegation, and John Welch, who was now working as a senior aide to the Heritage Minister, was sent home (with pay) until he could clear his name.

Beginning in the mid-90s Brault paid a Liberal fundraiser over \$1 million to acquire government contracts. At one time he agreed to make 4 payments of \$25,000 each to get the lucrative contract for advertizing the gun registry. (No wonder it became so popular!)

Large amounts of money were passed through various businesses, according to Brault, for the primary purpose of funding the Liberal Party. That's called money

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The new pope: how new?

Harry der Nederlanden

The choice of a well-known cardinal, Joseph Ratzinger, to follow Pope John Paul II as Benedict 16th, is seen as a decision that for the time being the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church wants more of the same. Ratzinger was the best known of the cardinals in Rome to Catholics and Protestants alike, for he was the pope's chief doctrinal officer, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issuing numerous statements, speeches and lectures, and authoring a large number of books. If John Paul II was the philosopher pope, says Michael Novak, this one is the theologian pope, for many of his books and articles are scholarly and deep theological studies.

He was so close to his predecessor that some referred to him as the vice-pope, and in the *National Post* Father Raymond J. de Souza describes him as

"the rock under John Paul." A reviewer of Ratzinger's book *Salt of the Earth* notes that the book was John Paul's bedside reading during his convalescence from his gunshot wound. A *Globe and Mail* headline reads "Benedict the Strict" and headlines in prominent U.S. papers use the adjective "hard-liner." Even Catholic publications have for years dubbed him "the Vatican enforcer," for in the past it was his job to call those straying too far out into left field to conform to Catholic teaching.

However, he is repeatedly described as a warm and gentle person who listens attentively, and his choice of the name Benedict has been interpreted as the expression of a desire to be a peacemaker, for this was the direction set by the previous Benedict. John Allen of the *National Catholic Reporter* writes, "Anyone with personal experience of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is usually struck by



the contrast between his public image as stern and authoritarian, and his personal demeanor, which is always gracious, humble, and open." The previous pope turned out to surprise those who thought they had weighed him well, and so might this one.

A quick survey of recent speeches made by Ratzinger quickly brings to the fore his

concern with relativism, with the erosion of a belief in foundational truth. He sees it as the greatest danger facing the church in contemporary society. Whereas a previous generation was attracted to the theme of liberation, he says, this one is tempted by an idea of toleration that destroys any notion of truth.

In a lecture given at St. Patrick's
See New pope p. 2...

News

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laundering. The money gets clean, but those who handle it get dirty hands. The shenanigans described by Brault involved people in fraud, conspiracy, extortion, bribery and forgery. The only thing lacking to turn this into a movie is a body.

Brault told the inquiry that he resented making the payments but was told it was the only way to acquire federal contracts. One wonders whether he was also reluctant to pocket the exorbitant profits he made on those contracts. Between 1995 and 2001 he and his wife "earned" over \$6 million, a good share of it on the sponsorship contracts.

Brault and his company funneled over \$1 million into the Liberal coffers in those years. (It was an inefficient funnel: a lot got diverted.) He garnered almost \$60 million in sponsorship contracts, fees and commissions and on top of that got another \$112 million in other advertizing contracts. You can see why he was tempted. It was

a good return on his investment.

One can also understand his resentment, for Jacques Corriveau, a Liberal organizer and confidante of Chretien, demanded a 10 percent kickback on one batch of contracts and 17 percent on another. To make up for the kickbacks, Brault said he had to overcharge for the work he undertook to do.

The Liberals, however, deny that any of the money ever came to the Liberal Party proper. It all went to some parallel group whose members happen to have the same names as Liberal Party operatives.

Here's an example of how the money was intended to be spent. Luc Lemay, the owner of a couple of advertizing agencies, received \$333,000 to sponsor a series of hunting-and-fishing shows and farm fairs. How does this promote Canada? His job was to see to it that the maple leaf and the name of Canada would be prominently featured. One begins to see how

such contracts might be highly desirable and hugely profitable.

But there's more. The show was canceled. Was Lemay asked to return the money? No, he was told to redirect it to some other events. Which ones wasn't specified. So he redirected the funds to other events which cost a total of \$5,000. I'm no accountant, but that has to be a tidy profit margin.

Later an event sponsored to the tune of \$508,000 was also canceled. Lemay claims he tried to give the money back but was rebuffed by Pierre Tremblay, the Minister of Public Works. If he thought there was something wrong with that, he didn't raise a fuss.

When you read a novel with a plot like this, you think, 'How unrealistic. Somewhere in the many agencies and businesses involved there would be one honest person who'd blow the whistle.' But it took government employees — Sheila Fraser and a persistent Gomery to uncover the

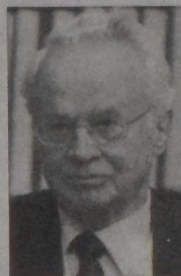
corruption. That's one point of light in a scandal that has cast a wide and dark shadow.

A few months ago, too, both journalists and politicians were squawking that the Gomery inquiry was a matter of sending good money after bad. It was all just small potatoes anyway. Chretien's lawyers and Chretien himself tried hard to bring the whole business to a premature close by charging that Gomery was biased. Martin is to be commended for keeping the investigation going.

Although Martin and his followers comprised a quite distinct faction within the Liberal party, it is hard to see how he will emerge from this untainted. Could all this have gone on without the knowledge of Jean Chretien? Perhaps, but it seems doubtful. Could Martin, as Finance Minister, have been totally oblivious to these shady dealings? You'd think he would have had to have his hands over his ears.

Martin was part of a Liberal government when the only thing it could think of to address separatism was to toss big bucks at it and hope some of it would stick. That still seems to be a large part of Liberal political strategy: take a poll to discover the latest object of concern and then throw money at it.

This is a big scandal for Canada. We have a democracy in which the government feels it necessary to bribe and browbeat its citizens to make them love their own country. Where, I wonder, do we get our sense of superiority to the U.S. Down south people love their country for free.



Jacques Corriveau

New Pope ... continued from p. 1

seminary in California, he said: "As reason has turned away from the ultimate questions, it has become indifferent and tiresome, it has become incompetent for addressing the life questions of good and evil, of death and immortality.... In fact, if we no longer speak about God and man, about sin and grace, about death and eternal life, then all that remains is sound and fury, a useless attempt to cover up the silencing of what is authentically human."

"Only a reason that remains open to God, a reason that does not relegate morality to the subjective sphere and doesn't reduce it to pure calculation, can avoid the manipulation of the notion of God and the sicknesses of religion and can offer a therapy," he wrote in another setting.

His strong critique of post-modern relativism has endeared him to evangelical conservatives, who also praise his strong pro-life stance against abortion, euthanasia and same-sex marriage. John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, also notes, "While the media will focus on his positions on social issues, the vast majority of his writings are about the person and nature of Jesus, the beauty of God, and the nature of the church as source of healing and mission in the world. Those of course are all topics that

resonate not just with Catholics, but with Protestants as well."

He goes on to point out, however, that Ratzinger continues John Paul's devotion to Mary and the stress on clericalism, that is, the accentuation of the prominent role of the priesthood in the church. Ironically, in the West his election may be more welcomed by evangelical Protestants than by many Catholics, who have to live under the regime of a celibate, all-male clergy and a policy against contraception that the huge majority reject. Many lament his election, agreeing with Hans Kueng that this is a setback for reform within the church. But in his previous position he was especially focused on the interface between church and world, so how he addresses the pressure for reform within the church remains to be seen.

Biographies of the new pope point out that, like his predecessor, his early years unfolded under the hard heel of Nazi totalitarianism, and that this has taught him the importance of truth in the face of dangerous ideologies. Thomas D. Williams wrote of him in *First Things* (Feb, 1998): "Having grown up in a Germany dominated by Nazi propaganda and the suppression of heterodox opinions, he grew notably inimical to authoritarianism and ideologies

that attempt to stamp out uncomfortable truths, especially the truth about God and the human person. Once we have suppressed the truth, Ratzinger says, we are left only with our personal choice, which is necessarily arbitrary. 'When decisions are left solely to the domain of the will, whether particular or collective, man is debased.'"

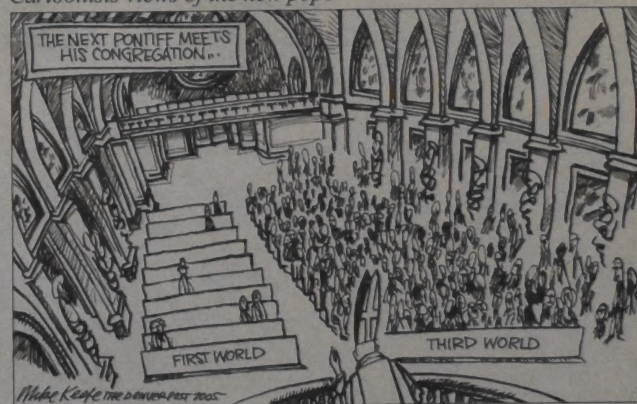
But Kenneth Woodward, in the *New York Times*, reminds us "that Benedict XVI was not always a conservative theologian. As an adviser to German bishops at Vatican Council II, the young Joseph Ratzinger was a university professor and progressive theologian who urged a more open and accommodating attitude toward the world. He became a conservative in reaction to the student riots in Western Europe in the late 1960s, and to the wild embrace of theological novelties that erupted after the council."

Williams describes the new pope's spirituality as Augustinian, downplaying "man's earthly accomplishments and highlights instead the City of God, the kingdom wrought by God's grace that is not of this world. Borrowing John Courtney Murray's useful distinction between two valid Christian orientations, an incarnational humanism (which emphasizes Christianity's immanence and the close link between

grace and the nature it perfects), and an eschatological humanism (which focuses on Christianity's otherworldliness and man's pilgrim

condition), Ratzinger clearly leans toward the latter — whereas John Paul II tends toward the former." (Compare Van Reken's emphasis p. 6)

Cartoonists views of the new pope



Politics

The Legacy of John Paul II

In the autumn of 1978 a pope died after only 33 days on the throne. Breaking their travel budgets for the second time in slightly more than a month, the College of Cardinals assembled once again in Rome and did something unprecedented: they elected a Pole as pope. He was Karol Józef Wojtyła, archbishop of Krakow. At the time he was still a fairly young 58 years of age – a vigorous athletic type who enjoyed skiing in the Tatras Mountains of southern Poland. He was an intellectual, poet and playwright, schooled in phenomenology and possessing a philosophical sophistication nearly unprecedented for an occupant of the papacy.

That a Pole should be so honored was especially noteworthy. A predominantly Catholic country, Poland had been in the grip of Soviet-style communism since the end of the Second World War. Wojtyła was born only two years following Poland's independence after more than a century of foreign domination. He lived through the turmoil of the twentieth century and had come to know the two totalitarian ideologies of the era first hand. Nazi German occupation of Poland coincided with his youth, while he grew to maturity under the succeeding communist régime.

Wojtyła became a priest in 1946 and from that point he advanced steadily through the hierarchy of his church, becoming archbishop of Krakow in 1963 and a cardinal in 1967. Eleven years later, after the back-to-back deaths of Paul VI and John Paul I, the College of Cardinals surprised everyone by choosing Wojtyła as their successor. At the time an ageing Leonid Brezhnev was still leading the Soviet Union, an apparent global superpower whose hold on its east European empire seemed impregnable. Josef Stalin is reputed to have asked mockingly how many divisions the Pope had. Brezhnev might well have inquired the same thing concerning John Paul II, but with a tone of genuine worry in his voice. If the new Pope did not have actual military contingents at his disposal, he nevertheless had a huge following, not only in his native land, but, in attaining the papal office, throughout the world among nearly a billion Catholics.

In 1979 John Paul returned to visit his homeland. His message

to his fellow Poles, "Be not afraid," electrified his audience, emboldening them to follow Lech Walesa's leadership in establishing the independent trade union, Solidarity. Walesa himself has said that, prior to the Pope's visit, he had had difficulty finding ten people to join the movement, but afterwards he had ten million on side. The people had lost their fear of the régime, and we now know that it was only a matter of time before the entire fabric of communism unravelled. Indeed this will probably be judged to be John Paul's chief legacy to the world.

But, of course, there is more to his legacy than this. To begin with, he steadfastly held to the truth as he had been given to understand it. Many observers criticized the Pope for holding the line on the male priesthood, priestly celibacy, abortion and sexual ethics. Others criticized him for averring that the fullness of truth lies in the Catholic Church and that other churches possess only a measure of this truth. However, such criticisms often amounted to the complaint that he was too consistently Catholic and refused to treat the body of the Church's teachings as if it were the negotiable programme of a political party.

Ecumenical relations

Second, John Paul, despite or perhaps because of his traditionalism, sought to better relations between Rome and other Christian communions, especially the Orthodox. During his visit to Greece in 2001, he apologized for the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 – despite the fact that his predecessor on the papal throne, Innocent III, had already condemned the Crusade and excommunicated the crusaders shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, John Paul's ardent desire to visit Moscow never came to fruition, due to the persistent opposition of Patriarch Alexy II. Moreover, given that the young Wojtyła lost many of his childhood Jewish friends to the Holocaust, it is also worth noting that he made great efforts to improve Christian-Jewish relations, undertaking to make amends for past anti-Semitism within the Church.

Third, a number of prominent converts to Catholicism took the final steps in their journeys due to the personal witness of John Paul.

These include Sheldon Vanauken, Thomas Howard, Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, Peter Kreeft, Malcolm Muggeridge, Scott Hahn, former Church of England Bishop Graham Leonard and many more. Had someone of lesser personal stature been in the papacy, "crossing the Tiber" might have proved a more formidable move for these men.

Fourth, John Paul was the most travelled pope in history, journeying more than a million miles to proclaim the gospel in most of the world's nations. Indeed he has often been labelled a pilgrim pope.

A teaching pope

Fifth and finally, John Paul was a teaching pope, publishing a number of key encyclical letters setting forth the tenets of the Catholic Church in a number of areas. The most purely philosophical of his encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) and *Fides et Ratio* (1998), were intended to combat an historicist relativism that denied the reality of a truth capable of being known by human beings. Although he angered a number of Catholic intellectuals by placing firm boundaries around the very definition of Catholic theology, others found in his writings fertile soil for developing a Christian mind.

As for his social and political teachings, John Paul II stood very much in the tradition of his great predecessor, Leo XIII (1810-1903, pope from 1878), whose 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* ("On the Condition of the Workers"), set forth a distinctively Catholic approach to the problems of poverty and economic oppression as an alternative to the predominant liberal and socialist ideologies of the day.

John Paul's social encyclicals were subject to more than one interpretation by those who sought to fit him into one of the existing secular ideological categories. For example, those reading his third encyclical, *Laborem exercens* (1981), and noting his affirmation of the priority of labor over capital, were inclined to give the Pope something of a socialist reading. Similarly, those focusing on the 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* tended to see it communicating a progressive stance favorable to the economic advancement of the poor, drawing as it did on Paul VI's *Populorum*

Progressio of two decades earlier.

However, John Paul firmly opposed liberation theology, primarily due to its tendency to synthesize a Christian ethical stance with Marxist class analysis and to identify salvation with an earthly political project of dubious spiritual origins. To those sympathetic with a liberationist agenda the Pope appeared hopelessly conservative, despite his recognition of the need to address the systemic patterns of economic injustice in the world's poorest countries. Yet by the end of his pontificate liberation theology was largely a spent force.

Some reading John Paul thought him a kind of free-market liberal. The Catholic "whigs" associated with the journal *First Things* saw in him a supporter of what Michael Novak has called "democratic capitalism." After all, he had lived under an atheistic régime and a command economy. That should be enough to make him a supporter of human freedom in both its political and economic manifestations. Fr. Neuhaus and others claimed to find this liberalism in John Paul's 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, which, drawing on Leo's *Rerum Novarum*, affirmed private property and entrepreneurial activity in the face of a failed communist experiment.

However, David L. Schindler is almost certainly closer to the mark in seeing the Pope as a profound critic of western liberalism, whose possessive character is unable to account for human life, and indeed the whole of creation, as a gift of God's grace. If John Paul was difficult to categorize politically,

it was because, as a learned Christian conversant with the spiritual foundations of the modern west, he understood well that the debate between individualism and the various forms of collectivism is a sterile one, unable to bring us closer to the truth of the reality of a pluriform society. In this respect, once again, John Paul was the heir of Leo XIII and his twentieth-century followers.

As a Reformed Christian, I could, of course, find any number of areas of disagreement with the Pope, particularly those traditionally dividing Rome and the Reformation, and even in the way that, say, *Fides et Ratio*, articulates the relationship between faith and reason. Yet I freely admit that Pope John Paul II was a great man – indeed one of the greatest of his era. I pray that his ecumenical vision will catch on and that all Christians will one day find themselves united in the service of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. This is something for which John Paul himself prayed and for which the rest of us should be praying as well. May he rest in peace and may God bless his successor.

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Editorial

The LORD make his face shine upon you....

Harry der Nederlanden

We squirm uncomfortably when we hear evangelicals described as suspicious aliens who may be a threat to the core values of Canadian society. We think of ourselves as pretty safe and trustworthy – harmless, really. But with ever greater regularity evangelicals are depicted as a threat to democracy because they defer to the will of God rather than to the will of the majority. They are ignorant because they question the scientific fact of evolution. They are intolerant because they reject fundamental human rights – like gay marriage. They're just not free, rational, tolerant people-friendly persons like the rest of us Canadians.

A cross-dresser with rings in his ears, nose, tongue and belly, purple spikes in his hair, who believes in UFOs and reincarnation, spends all his earnings on mobster rap and whose main goal in life is to be a contestant on *Survivor* is more acceptable than a conservative evangelical who supports Prolife. Better a person indifferent to politics and religion than one who submits himself to the other-worldly norms of religion.

More and more, Christians find themselves classified with those undesirables often labeled fundamentalists or theocrats. We are, to many of our fellow Canadians, almost as alien as those madmen who strap explosives to their bodies and stroll into a crowd in order to make an impression. Who knows, we may be capable of similar acts of madness. After all, to submit to a truth that comes from beyond sets you over against the truth that percolates naturally up from within the body politic – isn't that the root of violence?

It is true. We are a weird bunch, we Christians. If those suspicious secularists could have been present in our church Sunday morning, all their worst fears would have been confirmed.

A group of young people were marched in front of the audience to answer a number of questions. They were obviously brainwashed. Among other things, those young people swore to let a Jewish rabbi who was crucified 2000 years ago and who allegedly came back from the dead to be "the Lord of your life." If that wasn't strange enough, they also swore to "submit to the authority of

this church." Who on earth would take such pledges in this enlightened day and age unless they were brainwashed?

One of the young people had water dribbled on her head by the main speaker. Not only did he claim that this purified her, he also suggested she had just been killed – drowned – and then had emerged a brand new person. She didn't look any different afterward than before – other than that her hair was a little wet.

After this ritual was finished, the speaker raised his hand as though he were God himself, and he seemed to swear a kind of oath – that God would smile on them all the days of their lives. Now, that takes the cake. In the first place, who'd have the audacity to speak on behalf of God. If that isn't the height of arrogance! Who could possibly know the mind of God? In the second place, who'd make such a ridiculous promise to impressionable young people?

If God is the Maker and Master of the universe and of history and of everything, then he's like Ultimate Reality. Who could say to someone else: "Hey, listen up. Ultimate reality isn't going to be indifferent or hostile or destructive, for you from now on happy days are here, for God is smiling on you. See the sun up in the sky? From now on, the sun is always going to be shining, for God's face is turned toward you." Outrageous! It's contrary to all experience. It's a flouting of reason and sanity.

But it wasn't some little splinter cult. The building was packed. They had to put out extra chairs and the parking lot was full, parking along the street taken, so people were walking to church from a couple of blocks away. The place was swarming with kids and young people, and you should have heard them sing. Those few hundred people sang louder than a stadium full of people sing "O Canada" at a playoff game between the Maple Leafs and Calgary Flames. I kid you not; they are a demented lot!

Just who do they think they are?

It is good to try to see ourselves as aliens once in a while, even though it hurts to have others see us as such. And you have to admit, if these notions were a product of our own imaginations, they would indeed be outrageous. Who of us would have the temerity to lay claim to the enduring favor of the Lord of the universe?

Those words, to be credible, have to come from an authority outside of us, beyond us, for they do clash with our day to day experience. They are not something we would discover if only we really, really got in touch with our inner, most authentic selves.

Our pastor was able to raise his hand and utter those incredible words of blessing because he was authorised to do so. That authorisation comes with office. Hierarchy. Top-down stuff. Democracy doesn't give us such authority, such words, such cosmic scope. You need the language of monarchy to grasp it, of kings and rule and kingdoms. Alien stuff.

We need that top-down language to counteract the absurd idea that virtue, good, wisdom, purpose, vision, love and justice are things we can manufacture ourselves. We need to be taught this simple fundamental fact over and over again: that all good comes to us from God, the fountain of all good. When we presume to become the ground and source of those fundamental things that enable us to live together as human beings, we become totalitarian dictators who create labor camps and death squads. This is one thing we have learned from history.

Nevertheless, God does pour out his Spirit on us. He does authorise and empower us. Our pastor is not a superhuman being with mystical powers. He did not go up the mountain to get a revelation and speak to us as one who has conversed with the gods. He is an ordinary human being like the rest of us – limited, fallible, fallen, sinful. Yet, he could raise his hand over our children in that presumptuous manner and pledge them God's abiding and gracious presence.

That's a scandal that not just outsiders and secularists trip over. We trip over it ourselves. God does not wholly hand over the job of pouring out blessings on humanity and on the earth to us. Thank God! But he does install us as intermediaries, middle men and women. And as bodily, social, cultural beings, we create organizations, institutions, traditions, philosophies and theologies, families, businesses, corporations, governments, churches, denominations and so on. They may be distinct from our humanity but they are an indistinguishable part of it. All these things, too, are meant to be vehicles of God's blessing upon us and our children – like the hand of our pastor.

But look at our churches, quarreling denominations. Look at our government – mired in adscam. Look at the president of the most powerful nation in history, a Christian, sweating blood in Iraq. Look at our businesses and corporations: instead of providing dignified work for everyone and a share in the world's goods, they embody for many a process of dispossession.

Finding wrong – oppression, hypocrisy, racism, injustice, sexism, etc. – has been developed into an art nowadays. If reason was once in the service of natural law and science, today it is in the service of suspicion and critique.

The temptation is that as judges we become more harsh, more total, more absolute than God. We condemn the church for operating according to the principles of this world. We want it purified of power, accountants and lawyers, marketers, even of logical reasoning (theological argument). We condemn all businesses and corporations for their obsession with profit, for supplying us with all the junk we demand. We condemn oil companies for supplying us with the oil we need to heat our homes. We condemn farmers for destroying the environment with herbicides and fertilizers that help us get cheap food. We berate unions for blackmailing us to get benefits for workers. We lament that globalization is a tool of Western capital and wail because it is moving jobs to the Third World.

All we see at last is exploitation, militarism, greed, corruption, an empire of evil. We end up describing the world as though it were wholly under the dominion of Satan.

Then we blind ourselves to the hand of God still stretched out in blessing over us and our children. Then we are tempted to abandon the entire enterprise – politics, society and culture – to the forces of unbelief and withdraw into our own enclaves.

We are not permitted to do that – not as long as the Lord still turns his countenance toward us and smiles on us. For all that we have to express our gratitude to him and our delight in his smile is this our earthly, bodily, social, political, historical being. In that being we are knit and woven into the lives of the peoples and the nations – even as he was when he was here among us, obedient unto death. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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Centennial/Farming

Centennial memorabilia on sale online



Mugs, shirts, mouse pads and teddy bears are among many novelty items on sale to help commemorate the Christian Reformed Church's centennial anniversary in Canada.

Decorated with the "SeatoSea" logo, these products also help promote and cover costs associated with this summer's "Sea to Sea with the CRC" bike tour. According to Chris Berghuis, advancement manager for the bike tour, while the profit margin on these items is not large, proceeds will go to the tour and its support of church-planting initiatives in Canada.

"We kept the purchase price low because we want lots of people to share in the celebration in a variety of ways," Berghuis said. "We didn't want the cost to inhibit people from buying a 100th anniversary keepsake. This way we're able to offer these high quality products at affordable rates and support the tour at the same time."

The items are available in the web store at www.SeatoSea.org and can be purchased online one of two ways. For those affiliated with a local Christian Reformed congregation, selected items will be delivered to their church to save on shipping and handling charges. Others can purchase their items online and have the products shipped directly to their home.

In addition, church contact persons in participating CRC congregations will be setting up a small display of items in their church and/or distributing order forms to their members beginning in April. Members can submit and pay for their order through the contact person.

Ontario farmers are turning away from the 'One Voice' movement

Maynard van der Galien

Farmers hoping for one farm organization in Ontario, or the 'One Voice' movement will have to settle for something now referred to as 'The Unified Voice.'

But before I get to that, I have to mention that a new farm commodity organization has just started up in Ontario. Yes, another one. It's called the Fresh Vegetable Growers' of Ontario (FVGO).

The idea for the new organization emerged during the recent annual meeting at the convention of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (OFGVA).

They intend to develop partnerships with the OFGVA and with other farm organizations representing vegetable growers.

"For too long, producers of unregulated vegetables have struggled to get across their message to stakeholders, consumers, and government – but we're trying to rectify that situation," says John Jaques, the president.

The eight-member executive management team is working to establish an incorporated, not-for-profit association that will look after the specific needs of the "unregulated" vegetable producers, says an article in March issue of *The Grower*.

"At the OFVGA convention, we realized that being organized gives our growers a valuable voice to do what is in our sector's best interest," said the vice-president.

This newest farm organization is a significant regression from the 'One Voice' or 'The Unified Voice' movement.

You have to wonder why the existing OFVGA, or any of the other boards couldn't adequately represent the Fresh Vegetable Growers?

There are already too many boards and organizations representing fruit and vegetable growers in Ontario. There's the Tender Fruit Board, Apple Growers of Ontario, The Grape Growers of Ontario, Garlic Growers, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Ontario Process Vegetable Growers, Ontario Berry Grower's Association, Ontario Asparagus Growers, Fresh Grape Growers, Ontario Potato Board, Small Fruit and Berries.... I've probably missed a few.

The FVGO need to take a page from the movement of the times – fix the organization you are part of, get involved in the issues of concern, and mandate your people to deal with the issues.

There is absolutely no added value in running to your own corner and starting yet another organization.

At last month's Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) meeting, President Ron Bonnett told the board of directors that the 'One Voice' movement is now officially 'The Unified Voice.'

He said that, in order to keep all farm groups speaking with one voice, it was necessary to adopt the term 'The Unified Voice.'

There was a movement born in Renfrew County calling for one farm organization. That was the talk two winters ago. Then the Lanark Landowners' Association (LLA) in eastern Ontario came on the scene with their news-making tactics. They stood up for the little guy and did not back down. Their leader stood nose to

nose with a policeman on the centre line of a highway in Pakenham, where the group was selling beef. The photo made the front page of a farm paper. They staged an illegal deer hunt during the summer and got the attention of the media on deer damaged crops, they slammed the Nutrient Management Act, and they quickly had a large following of disgruntled farmers and rural landowners. The LLA is growing fast, with a membership now at 6,050, as new landowner associations spring to life across the province.

It's interesting to listen to some members of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO). Last fall, at their regional meeting in Napanee, LLA was on the agenda. Do we support them, or not? If I recall correctly, all (farmer's) hands shot up to support the feisty group of farmers. They fully admit that the LLA has aroused slumbering farmers and farm organizations from their sleep and awakened them to the reality of over-reaching government legislation.

One CFFO member said that all the policy positions put out by CFFO are "pie-in-the sky." It gets us nowhere. Many of the farmers nodded in agreement. It's time for action! For too long we've been soft and easy on the government. In bed with them!

So many of the good guys cheer on the bad guys (LLA) because they are out there doing the dirty work for us. That's how one retired soft-spoken CFFO farmer put it.

The 'One Voice' movement is dead!

Maynard van der Galien is a farmer and owns and operates the Old Towne Hall Restaurant and Tea Room in Renfrew, Ont.

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Christian living

Shifting visions of the Christian life Parts 1 & 2 of 3

Calvin P. Van Reken

Over the last forty years or so a significant shift has been taking place in the Reformed Christian's vision of how we should live as Christians. In this series of articles I want to talk about that shift.

Describing the shift

Forty years ago Billy Graham brought his crusade to Chicago, and I, 14 years old, joined the crusade choir. It didn't matter that I don't have a very good sense of pitch, I was surrounded by over 1000 tenors. One of the songs we sang almost every night went like this:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face,
and the things of earth
will grow strangely dim,
in the light of his glory and grace.

At the time I wondered why this song was not in our blue *Psalter Hymnal*. The music is marginal, to be sure, and the text is curious: As we look upon Jesus, are the things of earth supposed to grow strangely dim? Another hymn that we sang in my younger days suggested a similar, rather dismissive attitude toward the things of earth. One of them had this opening stanza:

I am a stranger here,
within a foreign land.
My home is far away
upon a golden strand.
Ambassador to thee,
from realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my king.

The song invites the questions: are we really strangers here? Didn't God design and create this world for us?

Some hymns were included in the gray *Psalter Hymnal*, but they were altered or reformed. A hymn in the gray *Psalter Hymnal* (#419) has a text written by the Anglican pastor George Croly. From our *Psalter Hymnal* we sing: "Spirit of God, who dwells within my heart, wean it from SIN, through all its pulses move." But that isn't exactly what Rev. Croly wrote back in 1867. He wrote what we used to sing from the blue *Psalter Hymnal*: "Spirit of God, who dwells within my heart, wean it from EARTH. . . ."

Rev. Croly was not expressing in his text a concern for sin in general. Rev. Croly was praying in particular for grace that would help him be weaned from any attachments to this world. In Reformed churches today this is a petition not often sung, nor spoken anymore. After all, our world belongs to God, shouldn't we feel at home here?

Today when someone makes public profession of faith in the Christian Reformed Church, the newer form in the back of the *Psalter Hymnal* offers up this

question, among others, to be answered by the one making profession: Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

When I made profession of faith in 1967 I was asked different questions: Do you declare that you love the Lord, and that you desire to serve him according to his Word, to forsake the world, to put to death your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

There it is again. This idea of forsaking the world.

Over these last 40 years or so the vision about how we should think about our lives now has changed. We used to think that the world is a wicked and dangerous place, full of temptation, trouble and sorrow. Christian believers forty years ago were encouraged in sermons, hymns, and liturgies, to avoid entanglements in this world so as to live godly lives, always looking forward to the eternal city whose architect and builder is God. The idea was that we are pilgrims here, traveling through this life, on the way to an eternal home.

The biblical basis for the older vision

Let me say a word about the biblical basis for this vision. The model of the life of faith is Abraham, whose life involved an actual pilgrimage from Haran to the land God would show him. He came to Canaan, but when he got there he didn't build a house, he set up his tents. He was not settling down. He camped. Abraham considered himself on the way to the city without foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham was guilty of the accusation so many today fear: he was looking for pie in the sky, by and by. And it wasn't only Abraham. When the author of Hebrews in chapter 11 speaks of Abraham, Noah, Enoch, and Abel, he says of them: "They admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God,

for he has prepared a city for them."

This description is held up for us, not simply as a history lesson, but as part of that great cloud of witnesses who demonstrated the kind of faith that we should emulate. We, too, should be longing for a better country — heaven itself.

In the life of Israel under the old covenant, each man was to make three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem, to the temple, in order to worship God there. Mark Smith of Yale University says that "taken together, the three feasts recapitulated the central events in Israel's history between slavery in Egypt and entrance into the land of Canaan." God's Old Testament people not only were shaped by a great pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan, but they were commanded by God to go on three annual pilgrimages that recalled events in that great pilgrimage.

These were more than a reminder of some past pilgrimage. They were a parable of their lives on earth, and ours.

This vision was not altered by the coming of the Lord or in New Testament teaching. I just read from Hebrews; Paul promotes the same vision. "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

John, the beloved disciple, writes: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. . . . The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:15, 17) In 1 Peter 2:11 Peter

identifies Christians as aliens and strangers in the world. And there are many other passages that emphasize the same idea.

Thus, this older vision of our current circumstances has unwavering biblical warrant. We are pilgrims here, strangers in a strange land. Our true home is far away and in our future. Since the fall God's people have been strangers and aliens in the world. We are pilgrims now who are on the way to a heavenly place, an eternal city, being prepared for us. This vision of the Christian life recognized the serious effects of the fall, warned us about sin, and pointed us to a glorious future.

But this is a vision the church is gradually losing. We need to ask: What is replacing it?

Another hymn in the blue *Psalter Hymnal* that isn't in the gray *Psalter Hymnal* is: "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" The third stanza asks three simple questions: "Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?" The questions are rhetorical, and the clear testimony of the hymn writer, Isaac Watts, is that this world is not a friend to grace, rather it presents foes and floods of problems as we journey home. The world is vile. It is fallen and spiritually dangerous. This is a key feature of the old vision.

In the last 40 years we have stopped seeing the world as so vile. So it is no surprise that this hymn missed the gray *Psalter Hymnal*. If we need to set a date for the beginning of this change, I think that 1966 is as good a year as any. In 1928 Synod had declared that certain secular amusements, although not intrinsically evil, were dangerous and should be avoided. In 1966 Synod adopted a report that said, in effect, that such amusements were not that vile and that Christians could enjoy them in moderation. I submit that this change in the evaluation of the evil of this world and the threat it poses to a Christian is at the heart of the new vision of the Christian life.

Features of the new vision

This new vision comes in varying degrees. In its minimal version, it is little more than a reminder to Christians that they must not to separate themselves into isolated communities. In its strongest version, however, it is a contemporary version of the social gospel: the world (i.e. culture) are reformable and we can and must fix them — and doing that is what is most important.

Some call this new vision "creation affirming." (I'll say more about this below). If the earlier version affirmed anything, you might want to say it was "fall affirming." The earlier version focused on the effects of the fall. It was alert to personal weakness and sin, and not optimistic about our ability to undo the effects of sin and make life better. The new vision is more optimistic.



Part of relief depicting resurrection of the dead on Judgment Day, Bourges cathedral

Christian living

This newer, optimistic vision of the world is changing how we live our Christian lives. First, by thinking the world not so vile we have made ourselves comfortable here, adapting to its contours with remarkable facility. A generation ago most Christian Reformed people avoided living ostentatiously. Today among those with wealth it is commonplace. Philip Yancey writes that his former pastor, Rev. Bill Leslie, told him that as churches grow wealthier and wealthier, their preferences in hymns changes from "this world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through" to "This is my Father's world."

Effects of the new vision

Today there is noticeably less interest in the life to come. We are more interested in what movies are coming out or what the stock market is up to. When life was brutish, nasty, and short it was an easier matter to focus on the life hereafter. That is why so many spirituals speak of heaven. The slaves

who wrote them wanted songs that would draw their minds away from the present circumstances and to a vision of glory. So they hopefully sang, "Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home" or "the angels beckon me, from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore." In contrast, we live insular lives; we are rich, free, and secure; we are at home here. If life is a pilgrimage, at our current stage many of us are not in tents – we are ensconced in a four star resort.

As we indulge ourselves in the good things of this life, we begin to lose interest in that other country, the heavenly one spoken of in Hebrews 11. Thus many are now uncomfortable with the idea that we have a mansion just over the hilltop, or that we should be looking beyond the sunset. So the first effect of not seeing this world, this life, as vile, is that we don't think it is dangerous and we become comfortable here.

The second effect is that it has altered our ideas of what Christians should be doing

– or what is most important. Many seem less and less enthusiastic about calling people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ with the idea that they will go to heaven when they die. Today some Christians actually speak disparagingly of "saving souls." For them the idea of personal evangelism has become off-putting. What is replacing it is an increased concern about correcting social injustices and reforming culture. By thinking this world not so vile or dangerous we have come to believe that we can safely engage it. A generation ago Christian Reformed people worried about worldliness, and the effects that involvement with the world would have on Christian integrity and personal faith. In contrast, today many are more concerned to transform the world than are worried about being transformed by the world.

So as this world becomes the chief focus of the Christian life we are encouraged to help bring every square inch of creation into subjection under Christ. Fading is the idea that we endure to the end in the simple hope

of some trans-historical salvation. We are to be co-creators with God, helping him to usher in the kingdom in real time.

To summarize, the new vision is rather optimistic about this world, this life. It presses us to no longer see this life as so evil or so vile. We are undergoing a shift from a sin-recognizing vision that was cautious about the world and Christian involvement in it, to a creation-affirming vision, one that encourages a Christian simultaneously to enjoy and transform it.

How shall we evaluate this fundamental shift of visions of the Christian life in the Christian Reformed community?

Calvin P. Van Reken is Professor of Moral Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. This series of articles were delivered as the convocation address given at Calvin Theological Seminary, September, 2003.

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Church

Evangelical Lutherans facing divisive issue – ordination of non-celibate homosexuals

R. Albert Mohler

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA] Church Council released its recommendations to the denomination's Churchwide Assembly on issues related to sexuality on April 11, 2005, setting the stage for what promises to be one of the most acrimonious debates ever conducted by a denominational organization.

The recommendations came on the heels of two reports issued by theologians on both sides of the controversy. In the end, the Church Council went in another direction entirely, rejecting the recommendations from its "Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality," released in January. That report called for the church to adopt what amounts to a "local option" policy, permitting local churches to violate the church's standards for ministers without penalty. In essence, this recommendation amounted to an acknowledgement that the ELCA is so polarized on the issue of homosexuality that an honest compromise is impossible. Honesty and integrity would have required the denomination to take official action, either to allow the ordination of practicing homosexuals or to exclude practicing homosexuals from the ministry. After years of study, the church's task force recommended that the church maintain its policy explicitly prohibiting the ordination of practicing homosexuals, but allow churches to disobey and violate the policy without penalty or disciplinary procedures. In other words, this mainline Lutheran denomination attempted to adopt a ministerial form of the Pentagon's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

On March 1, seventeen ELCA theologians issued "A Statement of Pastoral and Theological Concerns," calling on the church to reject the recommendations from the task force. "We urge that all three recommendations of the task force be rejected since, if adopted, they would alter fundamentally the ecclesiology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that, in turn, would threaten not only the unity and stability of this church but, as a consequence, its ability to proclaim the truth of the gospel."

These seventeen theologians, including well-known figures such as Carl Braaten, Robert W. Jenson, Hans J. Hillebrand, and Jean Bethke Elshtain, saw the task force's recommendations as calling for the church to adopt a position of compromise that lacked all integrity. Specifically, they warned that the recommendation that the church ignore clear violations of its ministerial standards "threatens to destabilize the unity and constitution, as well as the historical, biblical, and confessional teachings and practice of this church." Furthermore, the theologians argued that the third recommendation, taken seriously, nullified the integrity of the entire report. They identified the report's recommendation of "no change in policy" while it suggested what amounted to a major shift in policy, was "the most conspicuous logical inconsistency."

These seventeen theologians accused the task force of recommending that the denomination should substantially surrender its authority in establishing credentials for ministers, thus abdicating "its theological and moral constitutional responsibility." The theologians also protested the task force's understanding of conscience, asserting that the task force understood conscience only in a subjective sense. This subjective understanding of "conscience" is in direct violation of what Scripture and Martin Luther taught, "thus misrepresenting both." As the theologians' statement clarified: "For Luther, the holy and righteous conscience of the Christian must agree with God's Word; an erring conscience, separated from Scripture, can react only in accordance with selfish desires resulting from weakness in faith." That strong statement should be heard by all those who cite "conscience" as license for rejecting or violating the clear teachings of Scripture. These theologians are absolutely correct in their insistence that conscience must be, as Luther clearly understood, bound by the Word of God.

Similarly, the theologians insisted that the term "pastor" is always associated with "the standard of sound teaching" in Scripture. The teaching of every pastor must be tested by Scripture, and "pastoral concern" must be based upon the faithful application

of scriptural teaching.

Finally, "For the reasons given we urge that all three recommendations of the Task Force be rejected since, if adopted, they would alter fundamentally the ecclesiology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that, in turn, would threaten not only the unity and stability of this church but, as a consequence, its ability to proclaim the truth of the Gospel."

On April 6, a group of more liberal theologians responded with a call for the task force's recommendations to be adopted. According to this statement, the theologians "represent a variety of perspectives and methodologies in our approaches to the questions of sexuality, ethics, theology, and ecclesiology." These theologians acknowledged that some "would have wished for greater welcome of gays and lesbians while others are more cautious." In the end, this more liberal group urged the denomination to adopt the task force report as "a much-needed and faithful compromise in the life of our church."

Within days, 85 theologians had signed the liberal statement, arguing that disagreements over sexuality "do not threaten the unity of the gospel." These theologians urged their denomination to accept the compromise proposed by the task force in order to allow the church further time to consider the question of homosexuality. Of course, this would mean the ordination and acceptance of some active homosexuals as ministers of the church, meaning that, in all reality, the denomination had made a decision to accept homosexual ministers, while lacking the courage to do so in a straightforward manner.

The ELCA Church Council, meeting April 9-11, chose to propose a very different form of compromise to the denomination. The group forwarded a report recommending "a limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church regarding the rostering of gay and lesbian people in committed, same-sex relationships." The group claimed that its proposal "holds the promise of enabling this church to continue to journey together faithfully for the sake of the mission of this church."

In substance, the recommendation calls upon the church to allow "exceptions" to its policy against the ordination of practicing homosexuals. In its description of the process, the Church Council stated that persons considered for such an exemption must meet all other policies of the church, "except for being in a committed, same-sex relationship." The recommended policy would call for "a reasonable assumption or confirmation that a congregation or other ministry will extend or continue a call to the person being continued for an exception," and would require the local bishop, if in support of such an exception, to seek endorsement by the "Synod Council." That group, if responding positively to the exception, would then make a request to the denomination's Conference of Bishops. The minister granted such an exception is also protected from any future discipline "by a subsequent bishop and/or council making a decision on the same set of facts."

The Church Council's reasoning, set forth in its report, makes for fascinating reading. At the onset, the group attempts to claim that both sides in the controversy share "a commitment to the authority of Scripture." In other words, the group asserts that those who would subvert or reject the clear teachings of Scripture are nevertheless to be understood as being committed to the authority of the Bible. In the typical language of denominational bureaucracy, the group also urged the church "to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ."

The group established two different positions on this issue of homosexuality – one seeing homosexuality "as sin and brokenness" and the other starting with the assumption that homosexuality is a "condition, not choice." In response to the first position, the Church Council called for compromise on the issue of homosexuality, even as it explicitly acknowledged that the understanding that Scripture consistently condemns homosexuality "has been held virtually unanimously by the Christian community throughout 2,000 years of history and continues to be the view held by most Christian church

bodies around the world today."

In arguing for the compromise, the Church Council pointed to the denomination's earlier decision to ordain divorced and remarried pastors, recognizing that this is "a condition specifically condemned in Scripture by Jesus." Citing the change in policy for divorced and remarried pastors as precedent is tantamount to arguing that, since the church found a way around that biblical prohibition years ago, it should follow a similar path of compromising biblical teaching in dealing with homosexuality.

To those who hold the second position, believing the church should remove all strictures on homosexual persons, the group commended its compromise because it would create "an avenue by which gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships may be called into the ministry of this church." Furthermore, "just as it took the Church and the world many years to understand other critical issues, such as the remarriage of divorced people, this process provides the opportunity for continued discernment of where the Holy Spirit is leading this church."

Interestingly, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod [LCMS], a far more conservative Lutheran body, responded to the ELCA Task Force's recommendations as representatives from the two bodies met for the "Committee on Lutheran Cooperation" in St. Louis on March 29-30. The LCMS, committed to biblical inerrancy, responded to the ELCA with "a word of Christian concern about the recommendations of this report and the rationale for those recommendations." The report from the LCMS pointed directly to the authority of Scripture as the fundamental issue: "As the LCMS has wrestled with the sensitive issue of homosexuality, it has had to return time and again to the more fundamental question of how we go about addressing these questions in the first place: namely, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures as God's inspired and inerrant Word. There is widespread agreement among Biblical scholars of varying theological persuasions and positions that the Bible itself clearly identifies homosexual behavior as sinful." The LCMS statement went on to emphasize

See *Lutherans* p. 9...

Church

Villagers in India beat Christians, burn down prayer hall

Vishal Arora

NEW DELHI (Compass) — Hindu and Muslim villagers burned down a prayer hall and attacked three church members following a baptism ceremony in Kerala, India, on April 1. Two days later, villagers assaulted Pastor Paul Ciniraj Mohammed and his 54-year-old assistant.

Ciniraj is a Christian from a Muslim background. He pastors the church in Trivandrum and is the head of Salem Voice Ministries (SVM), which runs orphanages, village schools and adult literacy centers in Kerala.

"The incident took place in the slum area of Panamvilla village in Trivandrum, where we have a thatched prayer hall," Ciniraj told Compass.

"Four villagers from Panamvilla were baptized in a ceremony in the prayer hall early in the morning on April 1, which perhaps made some villagers unhappy," he said. A total of 26 adults from different villages were baptized during the ceremony.

"After the baptism, I went back to my place in Kottayam district. Later I heard that a group of local villagers, comprised of both Hindus and Muslims, attacked three of our church members while they were praying in the prayer hall," Ciniraj said. "After beating them up, the miscreants set the prayer hall on fire."

He continued, "Ours is the only Christian group in Panamvilla. Except for the 12 people who come to our meetings, the other villagers are either Hindus

or Muslims. Sections of the villagers from both communities are against Christians, and a kind of anti-Christian movement is evolving in the village."

When he heard about the attack, Ciniraj returned to visit the church members; however, he too was attacked as he questioned villagers.

"While I was still talking to a leader of the attackers, one old man hit me on the head," said Ciniraj. "Shivanandan, a 54-year-old church member who was with me, immediately intervened and tried to save me. He was also beaten until he started bleeding profusely. By God's grace, he is all right now."

Ciniraj said he did not report the matter to the police because the attackers apologized immediately after the beating.

"When they were beating Shivanandan, I knelt down and prayed to God to save him and also to forgive the attackers." Village women who witnessed the beating saw Ciniraj praying and were moved by his humility. They immediately asked the attackers to stop the beating and apologize.

Neighbors had made some negative comments about the Christians, but until the baptism ceremony on April 1, there had been no verbal threats or physical assaults.

Some church members said the local unit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu activist group, was behind the attack.

'Infantile' adults failing children, says Archbishop of Canterbury

Cedric Pulford

London (ENI) — Children are being deprived of their childhood and lack guidance from adults who themselves have not grown up, says the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

"When adults stop being infants, children can be children," said Williams, leader of the 78-million worldwide Anglican Communion, at a lecture in London on April 11.

The archbishop suggested that modern society is a "debased environment" marked by boredom, apathy and an addiction to novelty. Emotions "are indulged

but never educated."

He said it had been clear more than 20 years ago that children were being rushed through childhood so that they could be assimilated as quickly as possible into the commercial and sexual habits of supposed adulthood.

"That haste to consumerize and sexualize childhood has become more and more hectic in the intervening years," Williams said.

Consumer pressures lead to "pester power," where children hustle their parents to buy goods or treats. The archbishop said, "The right of children to justice involves challenging many of the habits of

the advertising world."

Children also suffer from an educational philosophy obsessed with testing, which he said is "another form of our obsession with results and productivity".

Williams said: "If we want to give children a chance of experiencing childhood as they should, experiencing it as a time to learn, play, grow in an environment of stability and security, we have to face the demands of being adults ourselves."

He added, otherwise: "We can become abusers of our children by default."

Anglicans ride the tide of popular church schools in England

Cedric Pulford

London (ENI)—The case of a teacher who was caught cheating in a bid to get her daughter into a church school has highlighted the growing popularity of these schools in England amid concerns about general educational standards.

Margaret Gillespie, the head teacher of a Roman Catholic primary school in London, claimed to live within the catchment area of a popular Anglican secondary school, Lady Margaret, but in fact she lived several miles away.

All denominations and faiths are able to set up schools with public funding, and church schools are so popular that the (Anglican) Church of England has launched a program to create 100 secondary schools within the public system. This would add to the church's existing number by more than 50 percent.

"Rumors of quality in faith schools are what parents hear about and appreciate," David Whittington, the denomination's national schools development officer, told Ecumenical News International. "They want

quality in exam performance but they also want an ethos that includes good behavior, discipline and morality."

He said that of the 29 additional Anglican schools opened so far, most are former secular schools where parents have chosen to put the school under church control. The schools do not charge parents, with most of the funding provided by the state.

Whittington said he did not know of a case where parents had rejected the chance to switch to church control. He said, "Clearly, this age is not as secular as the secularists put it."

Former Iranian officer jailed for converting to Christianity

Iran (Compass) — Iranian Christian Colonel Hamid Pourmand finds himself incarcerated in a group cell at Tehran's maximum-security Evin Prison with several internationally known political dissidents. An Assemblies of God lay pastor, Pourmand has explained to his fellow prisoners the circumstances of his arrest and

sentencing, based solely on his religious conversion to Christianity 25 years ago. "Actually, the government is very angry about this, because now he is very popular there in the jail!" a source commented.

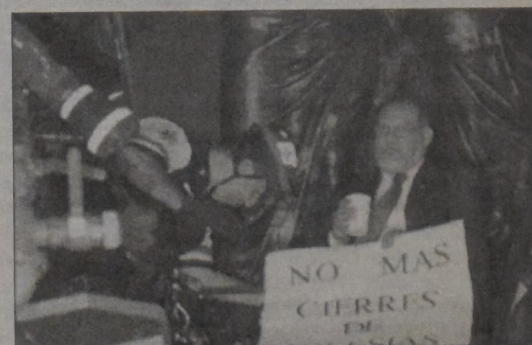
Friends remain fearful for Pourmand. Evin Prison became infamous after the 1979 revolution brought an

Islamist government to power — untold thousands of political prisoners were tortured and executed there after cursory trials. Pourmand's conviction on dubious charges of concealing his Christian faith from military superiors has left his wife, Arlet, and the couple's two teenage sons penniless and homeless.

Costa Rican congressman protests church closings

Costa Rica (Compass) — Recently, Carlos Avendaño, a leading evangelical member of Costa Rica's Congress, climbed the country's principal monument and spent several hours on the statue in one of San José's main parks to protest the closing of dozens of evangelical churches. Government officials say that 37 churches have been closed because they lack restrooms or the noise from their services exceeds legal limits. Avendaño, a former Pentecostal pastor, claims the number is closer to 80.

Typical is the case of the Holy Seed Church in San Isidro, closed since December following a neighbor's complaint about noise. The town's mayor recommended that the church be re-opened because of their "excellent social-spiritual work" with drug addicts, prostitutes and alcoholics, but health officials refused to reconsider the case. Avendaño's protest prompted Delia Villalobos, Costa Rica's vice-minister for health, to agree to negotiate the issue with evangelical officials.



Legislator Carlos Avendaño got the royal treatment atop the National Monument near the Legislative Assembly building March 18. Avendaño climbed onto the statue shortly after 4 p.m. and remained there for five hours while negotiating with the Ministry of Health. Relief workers brought him water and took his blood pressure as the congressman waited for the ministry to agree to reopen evangelical churches it had closed for alleged sanitary and noise violations.

...Lutherans cont. from p. 8

"the foundational issue of the authority of Scripture," arguing that the church must "say without qualification that the Holy Scriptures are, in their entirety, the inspired and inerrant Word of God."

The LCMS is entirely correct, identifying biblical authority as the "foundational and presuppositional issue" at stake in this controversy. The ELCA Church Council's recommendations are premised on the claim that the Bible can be respected and obeyed even by those who explicitly and self-consciously reject its teachings. The report's recommendation that "exceptions" be allowed in the ordination of active

homosexuals to the ministry means that those opposed to the normalization of homosexuality in the ELCA will simply lose the argument. The exceptions will soon become the rule, and the acknowledgement and acceptance of practicing homosexuals in the ministry, even in what are recognized as exceptional cases, will inevitably lead to the full acceptance of homosexual ministers in the denomination.

The ELCA recommendations will be presented to the denomination's Churchwide Assembly later this year.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. is president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

60th Anniversary

Ships, flying saucers, coexistence and public schools

We've been getting calls on the Holland-America Line ad reprinted from 1952 that accompanied our retrospective article in celebration of our 60th anniversary in March. Either the \$150 price for a no-return ticket to Rotterdam was too juicy to pass up or there's a new wave of immigrants gathering — back to The Netherlands. (By the way, the \$150 didn't include a private cabin: you had to share one large bedroom. It doesn't say whether the sexes were segregated, but in the 1950s you didn't have to spell out those things.)

The ad mentions the Groote Beer, Waterman and Zuiderkruis as well as some newer ships. I'm afraid, folks, that those famous immigrant ships were long ago recycled into washing machines and refrigerators for a reviving Dutch middle class.

Sorry for the mix-up. I'm glad, though, that we didn't reprint the ads for farms in New Brunswick selling for under \$5000. We might have started a land rush eastward.

It would make a great nostalgia trip, wouldn't it, to make that same ocean crossing on the Holland-America Line. Just like in the early 1950's. The ad mentions several promenade decks, swimming pools, beautiful halls, a movie theater, night club, gymnasium and opportunities for sunbathing.

Although I was only 6 years old at the time, I recall that luxurious cruise well. The long promenades on the deck — mainly because the dark hold was too stuffy and smelled strongly of vomit. You didn't need a swimming pool, however. You just stood on deck near the bow where the spray from the breaking waves quickly refreshed you. Aaah! Salt water straight from the Atlantic.

I don't recall the beautiful halls, theaters and a night clubs, but I bet they were there. We Calvinists had better sense than to spend our money on such trash when we were surrounded by the great outdoors. And shuffleboard and whale-watching were free. Entertainment was provided by the crew playing soccer on the aft deck. However, they soon ran out of soccer balls and had to improvise with a burlap bag stuffed with rags.

But I especially remember the sunbathing. You were reluctant to go below decks because the smells made you nauseous, so you stretched out on the sunny side and enjoyed the balmy April weather, the vibrations from the ships engines massaging your contented backside. Oh, to be an immigrant again bobbing on the wide blue sea!

The Jan. 20, 1955 issue of *CC* reported that far fewer immigrants were arriving, and that they were beginning to come by plane as well as by ship. A new air route from Vancouver to Amsterdam was announced. It cut off 1000 miles from the previous route by flying over the North Pole, stopping in



A kitchen in the 1950's

Churchill, Manitoba to refuel. If there were strong headwinds, however, it had to make a second stop in Greenland.

Immigrating by way of cruise ship really was a much better way to travel, wasn't it? You missed all those polar bear stops.

Mennonites and flying saucers

In the first issue of 1955, Springdale CRC in Holland Marsh reported that it was shopping for new pews, as the old ones were ruined by the flood. Busloads of Mennonites were coming into Holland Marsh every day helping rebuild flood-damaged homes. Some volunteers worked at demolition and clean-up while teams of carpenters began reconstruction. They brought their own lunches with them so the Holland Marsh women wouldn't have to feed them.

Hey, Holland Marsh, how about a 50th anniversary thank-you party for the Mennonites? Or Sea-to-Sea cyclists how about a stop-over at Mennonite headquarters in Winnipeg to present them with a bundle of onions from Holland Marsh?

While the Mennonites were helping out in Holland Marsh, in the town of Cobalt in northern Ontario citizens were organizing for different purposes. Reacting to numerous sightings of flying saucers, they were organizing hunting parties to shoot them down. Subsequent issues of *CC* do not indicate that they were successful. That's what happens when you sit up all night in the woods waiting for flying saucers with your rifle and a keg of beer. Your aim gets thrown off just a little. A shame, though. It would have been such a boost for Ontario's tourist industry.

Peace with Ike

Many other Canadians, however, were peering into the sky anxious that one day they might see Russian planes or missiles overhead. "A new war would wipe out mankind," warn the *CC* headlines of Jan. 28, 1955. Quite a few of the cover stories

from the earliest issues of *CC* deal with the Cold War, missile defense, atomic power and discussions of the secret machinations of the Communists, in Canadian labor unions and politics as well as in the international scene. We gave the Communists considerable credit for boldness, commitment and cleverness in those days. Perhaps Communism did inspire that sort of energy in those post-war years; by

the end of the century, however, the idol was crumbling. It couldn't have happened to a worthier idol.

The article cited expressed the hope that the Russians were softening and giving up their ambitions of global domination. The West, said the writer, has now created a united front in NATO to fight Communist expansion. Faced with a stronger enemy, perhaps they were opting for coexistence. On the other hand, it may just be a tactic to lull the West into a false sense of security.

Another front page article discusses Eisenhower and the Republicans. They had come into power a couple of years earlier, promising to get tough with the Communists. Dulles, Ike's Minister of Foreign Affairs, had warned of "massive retaliation" by America to Russian aggression. However, Eisenhower had turned out to be a conciliatory president, opting for compromise rather than confrontation, says the *CC* article.

The following issues, however, keep a suspenseful eye on escalating tensions be-

tween Communist China and Chiang Kai Shek on Formosa (now Taiwan). Might this lead to another World War?

Enough Dutch already

In a Feb. 1955 *CC*, a reader from Smithers, BC compares the new *CC* with the earlier *Canadian Calvinist* and finds it lacking. The paper has strayed from its original purpose, complains the reader, namely to form our spiritual life in Canada and foster contacts among Calvinists. The new *CC* seems to be put together by recent immigrants from Holland. Its purpose seems to be to keep them abreast of news about Holland and provide information about settling in Canada, and most of it is done in Dutch. We should be getting news about Canada and the world in English, especially if it wants to speak to the young people.

Another letter in the same issue, however, expresses the hope that *CC* will continue to provide articles in Dutch since the writer is still not sufficiently adept in English.

The editor responds by assuring the first writer that eventually *CC* will become all English, but for the sake of those still struggling to learn the language it will continue to carry some news in Dutch for some time yet.

After having scanned the contents of the first few years of *CC*, I'm impressed by how much attention the paper paid to world news right from the beginning. It never focused solely on church affairs or on the problems of adapting to Canadian society. It also informed its readers about Canadian politics, even instructing them on the workings of government and on the history of their new country. Considerable space continued to be devoted, of course, to describing the land, climate and farming opportunities in various provinces. A lot of those post-war immigrants were itching for the chance to become their own bosses.

An article by Jacob Uitvlugt in the Feb. 18, 1955 *CC* warns that if we trust our children to the public schools, a time will come when we will discover that we have lost an entire generation. We will not have leaders for our churches.

It is true, he concedes, that erecting Christian schools now looks like an impossible task. But a full-blooded Calvinist will not let that deter him. He knows: with my God I can leap walls and scatter armies.

Uitvlugt recalls the early days in Chatham, Sarnia, Hamilton and Windsor: "We came in a time of indifference," he writes, "when Canada could do very well without us. It took most of us 10-15 years before we could get a leg up."

What a difference now in 1955, he says. Now there are many more possibilities. But the creation of Christian schools is proceeding far too slowly, he charges, pointing out that only three new schools have been built in Ontario since 1947.

"There are too many doubting Thomases among us," he charges. "Listen, fellow Calvinists, when you encounter one of these Thomases, seize him by the shoulders and give him a good shaking. Maybe you can wake him up."

I doubt anyone would give that sort of advice today. Nevertheless, it appears that quite a few people took his words to heart, as Christian school societies sprang up everywhere.

In the same issue of *CC*, we learn that 8 more CRCs were established in Canada in 1954, bring the total up to 125. However, there were only 66 ministers to serve them.

Mother's Day

Mother's lessons

Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema

Once upon a time I wasn't a mother. But for the last 25 years I have been. Some days I've felt like the old woman who lived in a shoe who had so many children she didn't know what to do, and I've longed to merrily row my boat down the stream to escape all my responsibilities. But at other times I've wanted to cling onto and never let go of days that seemed to hold the fairy-tale promise of living happily ever after – days punctuated with my children's laughter, insights, playful antics, and affectionate gestures.

No matter what each day was like – encouraging or frustrating, outstanding or mediocre, cheerful or sad – God has continually reminded me of his faithfulness. Isaiah's words speak to me: "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15).

During my first pregnancy, becoming a mother evoked in me a mixture of emotions – anxiety, anticipation, excitement, and joy. I gradually realized that I had embarked on a journey where I would learn things that my high school and college textbooks hadn't prepared me for. A month before Rachel's birth I wrote to her in my journal, "It took a lot of adjusting getting used to the idea of you growing in my womb. It's frightening to realize how much you will depend on me for your existence. But over the last eight months, as I've seen my body change, I'm not as afraid any more. I often can't wait to hold you in my arms."

Here's what I've learned as I've raced and rested, developed and danced, stumbled and stretched, hurdled and hurried, and faltered and frolicked in the motherhood terrain.

First, I've discovered how important it is for us to line up our view of parenting with a biblical theology of original sin, redemption, repentance, forgiveness, and new life in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. Why? Because it's dangerous and futile for us to fall into the trap of thinking we must parent perfectly – an impossible task which, if we foolishly try to master it, will rob us of joy and frustrate our kids. And it's equally perilous and debilitating for us to allow guilt over our parenting mistakes to



The diligent mother by Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin

cripple us. Christ's forgiveness sets repentant parents free!

As I raised my children, I was sometimes jealous of parents who seemed to have a perfect relationship with their kids. Or, to my shame, I judged parents whose relationship with their children was less than desirable. I understand now that both attitudes are wrong. All families, whether or not they appear to be ideal, struggle with sin's consequences. The bottom line is that Christian families may cast their anchor in God's grace, no matter what the relationship between the parent and the child is like.

Knowing that, I've tried to apply to mothering what Desmond Tutu wrote in *No Future Without Forgiveness*: "Someone has said there is nothing I can do to make God love me more, for God loves me perfectly already. And wonderfully, there is nothing I can do to make God love me less. God loves me as I am to help me become all that I have in me to become, and when I realize the deep love God has for me, I will strive for

love's sake to do what pleases my Lover" (Doubleday, 1999, pp. 85). The biblical framework that shapes my role as a mother has spurred me on to "please my Lover" as I nurture my kids.

Second, through experiencing emotions my kids aroused in me, I've begun to understand God's feelings toward his children. When I delight in my kids because of their love, obedience, generosity, and compassion, I hear an echo of Psalm 147:11: "The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love." When my daughter, then 10-years-old, acquired a bunny from a neighborhood family, her 15-year-old brother offered to build a rabbit hutch out of scrap lumber and chicken wire. I delighted in watching my son build it, knowing that he had taken the initiative to express his love for his sister.

When I feel pained because of my children's actions, I see a reflection of God's emotions before he flooded the earth because of humanity's sin: "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and

his heart was filled with pain" (Gen.6:6).

Who of us hasn't had to deal with our children's rejection, irresponsibility, snide comments, cynicism, ingratitude, or disrespect either briefly or for protracted periods of time? We feel pain then – sometimes like a sharp, searing knife and other times like a dull, aching throb.

Third, I've learned that novice moms and dads aren't helped or encouraged by veteran parents who unrealistically sentimentalize their families' early years. As I took care of my young children, I often encountered older people who emphatically proclaimed that I was experiencing the best years of my life. You've probably met them, too. Their nostalgic recollections don't match the difficult aspects of mothering – providing constant care, cleaning dirty diapers and spit-marred clothes, surviving sleep deprivation, nursing sick children, and, hardest of all, coping with a dearth of adult

conversation. Their idealist strolls down memory lane and overlook the exacting, strenuous contours of nurturing young children and imagine cozy scenes that bear little resemblance to real events.

On the other hand, I've learned much from women who have honestly told me about their struggles and joys. For example, my mother-in-law, who nurtured nine children while living through such challenges as enduring World War II and immigrating from Holland to Canada, never pretended that raising a family was easy. However, she still experienced joy in being a mother. Young parents are blessed and strengthened when seasoned parents like my mother-in-law admit the combination of victories and failures, joys and sorrows, and exhilaration and mediocrity that characterized their experience.

Fourth, I've comprehended, though slowly and with repeated struggles, that if I want to be a nurturing parent who raises children to become dependable, accountable adults I must follow the advice on a note I once posted on

my refrigerator door: Don't pick up the bag!

In *Living Simply in God's Abundance: Strength and Comfort for the Seasons of a Woman's Life*, Suzanne Dale Ezell tells readers that the next time their children come to them with a problem, "quickly stop and imagine yourself putting the request or problem into a beautiful, fancy shopping bag. Then set the bag down between you. You may look at the bag. You may discuss the bag and its contents. You may even move the bag around a little. But don't pick it up! If the contents of the bag don't belong specifically to you, don't pick it up. Leave the problem right where it belongs – at the feet of the speaker" (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, pp. 186).

When my teenage daughter told me that she had lost her glasses, I was presented with a choice. I could have paid for a new pair, or I could have made her pay. The first action would imply that I took responsibility for her problem. The second option would imply that I was giving her an opportunity, as Ezell says, "to engage in a little problem solving" of her own. (87) What would she learn if I replaced her glasses? What would she learn if she paid for them? I didn't pick up the bag.

Though Ezell's advice can be difficult to follow – after all, it's tempting to pick up the bag – when we heed it, our loads are lightened and we have the pleasure of watching our children become adults who take responsibility for their own actions.

Fifth, I've grasped how weak and limited I am. I can't be everything my kids need. I can give them physical and emotional shelter, but I can't protect them from all harm. I can feed their bodies, but I can't save their souls. I can clothe them, but I can't heal all their hurts. I can love them, but I can't do so perfectly. There's only one who can do all that—our Father in heaven. Another note posted on my refrigerator reminds me that "Only God can give all of himself to everyone!" When we realize our limitations, we learn to lean on God's everlasting arms. And that's the only place Christian parents want to be.

During 25 years of parenting I've learned quite a lot. And I look forward to discovering even more of what it means to be a mother who reflects God's heart.

Archeology

Canadian native is key player in Petra exhibition

Myrna Anderson

Life changed pretty drastically for Joel Zwart in February 2004 when college president Gaylen Byker stopped by his office to tell him about an opportunity.

A major exhibition, *Petra: Lost City of Stone*, culled from collections of Nabataean artifacts in the U.S. and Jordan, was in search of a venue for the spring of 2005. Take a look at the exhibition web site, Byker suggested. Could Calvin possibly host Petra?

At the time Zwart, the 29-year-old director of exhibitions at Calvin College, and native of Niagara-on-the-Lake, thought the suggestion was pretty outrageous.

In fact, after looking at the Petra website he began to compose an email message to the president, expressing his reservations. In the midst of the message Byker stopped by again.

Says Zwart: "I could tell he was extremely excited and prepared to make this happen. I deleted the unfinished email and never spoke of it again."

What followed over the following year was a torrent of activity on Calvin's campus as members of the college's staff – chief among them Zwart, who had mounted many shows, but none this prestigious – prepared to bring this comprehensive, museum-created exhibition of Nabataean culture to Calvin.

If not for Zwart's involvement, says Byker, *Petra: Lost City of Stone* might never have come to Calvin.

"Joel has been an essential member of the Petra team from the very beginning," says Byker. "His expertise and experience were pivotal in the approval of Calvin as a host site by the organizers at the New York and Cincinnati museums."

Zwart earned that expertise painstakingly through a number of jobs and educational forays – some museum-related and some not.

Though he originally wanted to be a



Joel Zwart, director of exhibitions at Calvin, examines Petra artifacts

fighter pilot (and drilled as an Air Cadet), by the time Zwart went to college, his interest had turned to the fine arts. He arrived at Calvin in 1993 and pursued a major in history and double minor in art and French.

"Then," he says, "I did one of the smartest things I ever did at Calvin. I was interested in historic sites – local history and museums – and I decided I was going to take an internship at a museum to see if I enjoyed that line of work."

During Zwart's internship at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, his Calvin advisor was none other than Bert de Vries, a professor of history and archaeology whose long professional experience in Jordan has been a crucial component of Calvin's hosting of *Petra: Lost City of Stone*. Interestingly de Vries also has Canadian

ties, having immigrated in 1952 from the Netherlands to Chatham, where he lived for four years before graduating high school and leaving for Calvin.

Zwart followed that internship with one at the Muskegon Museum of Art, working with quality print and paintings from American and European artists.

After graduating from Calvin, Zwart married and went on to earn a master's degree in historical administration from Eastern Illinois University in 2001. He then was hired directly out of grad school as the director of education for the Holland Historical Trust, where he wrote educational materials, trained docents and managed lecture series, member programs, public events and school tours.

In the spring of 2003, Zwart returned to his alma mater as the director of exhibitions where he is responsible for curating shows, tending Calvin's permanent collection and managing the college's Center Art Gallery.

"I came to Calvin," he says, "because I saw a lot of opportunity for the college's exhibition program to be strengthened."

For the last two years, he has worked at those goals, attracting shows such as a recent one featuring 20th-century masters like Andy Warhol and another on the Sudan featuring the photographs of Calvin alum Ryan Reed.

And then *Petra: Lost City of Stone* arrived in six semis filled with ancient artifacts, video features, paintings, drawings and more. Zwart, a member of the Petra steering committee, had already created the exhibit's facilities report, designed the

exhibit's layout and visited the exhibition in both New York and Cincinnati.

Now it remained for him to actually install all of *Petra's* pieces (with generous assistance from both the Cincinnati and New York museums, collaborators on the creation of *Petra*) and assist in a whirl of educational and cultural activities Calvin added to the exhibit.

It was a job that one day might find him installing a gigantic 2,100-pound bust of Dushara, the Nabataean "god of the mountain" and the next day doing an interview with a Detroit radio station to promote the *Petra* project (the point person for *Petra* public relations is another Canadian – Calvin director of media relations Phil de Haan, a native of Exeter).

Byker is appreciative of *Petra's* many Canadian connections, saying simply that "the members of the *Petra* team have all come together to make the exhibition a stunning success."

For his part Zwart is grateful for the whole experience, despite or maybe because of the way it stretched him and Calvin.

"I'm honored to be playing such a central role in bringing this exhibition to life here at Calvin," he says. "History is in the details, and, collectively, the artifacts in this exhibition add a small but important piece to the historical puzzle."

PETRA FACT BOX

Features over 200 exceptional objects – many on display for the first time in North America. Is housed at Calvin College for the third and final leg of its U.S. journey. Will run from now until August 15 at Calvin College. The exhibition will travel to Calgary and Ottawa after it closes Calvin. Tickets can be purchased at 1-800-PETRA05. More information at www.calvin.edu/petra

From l. to r.: Relief sculpture with head of Medusa; terracotta plaque with three musicians; relief sculpture of eagle on thunderbolt; and bust of Melpomene (Greek muse of tragedy) holding a theatrical mask



History/Stewardship



Petra – a brief history

For seven centuries, Petra fell into the mists of legend, its existence a guarded secret known only to the local Bedouins and Arab tradesmen, a Jordan website tells us. Finally, in 1812, a young Swiss explorer and convert to Islam named Johann Ludwig Burckhardt heard locals speaking of a "lost city" hidden in the mountains of Wadi Mousa. In order to find the site without arousing local suspicions, Burckhardt disguised himself as a pilgrim seeking to make a sacrifice at the tomb of Aaron, a mission which would provide him a glimpse of the legendary city. He managed to bluff his way through successfully, and the secret of Petra was revealed to the modern Western world.

The city predates its mention in Scripture, where we learn that King David subdued the Edomites, probably around 1000 BC. Petra was one of the great cities of Edom. But the city became a flourishing center of trade and a stop on an important trade route under the Nabateans, who gradually settled the area.

The city may have housed 20,000-30,000 people during its heyday. The fortunes of Petra began to decline when the trade routes shifted. Its location makes it easy to defend, as its approach is a narrow, winding valley with steep stone walls. The entrance to the city is a narrow cleft, seen in one of the Indiana Jones movies, that is just wide enough to accommodate two horses side by side.

One highlight at the exhibit was actually unearthed by a graduate of Calvin College: Neal Bierling, an archaeologist, teacher and photographer helped excavate a marble Byzantine church pulpit that will be on display at Calvin.

Bierling says one of the interesting things about Petra's history is its position as a center for the rise of Christianity. "There was an earthquake in Petra in 363 AD," Bierling says, "that many historians say destroyed Petra and its place as a thriving Middle Eastern city. In fact, after the earthquake Petra became a hotbed for the growth of Christianity. Interestingly the Christians in Petra took the pagan temples that had been destroyed and used the materials to build churches and chapels. That's been kind of an untold part of the Petra story."

Budgeting rule #3 "Know debt"

It's so normal today to borrow money – everyone does it, right? That's not true! Retailers and money lenders want you to believe that because it's in their best interest to collect your interest. The Scriptures have a lot to say about debt, with Proverbs 22:7 stating very clearly that "the lender is our master."

This article (written by my colleague Greta Luimes) is the final one of a series of three articles based on Ted Boer's book *Three Simple Rules – Guaranteed to Improve Your Finances*. (Contact me for a copy (\$6.50 includes mailing) or visit www.ThreeRules.org and download your own free copy.)

Debt can be dangerous because it's expensive. It can ruin us financially and it can unravel our families. This can happen when we don't understand and respect debt. It does not, however, necessarily mean we should not ever incur proper debt. Debt can lead us into a financial bondage that causes us to become distracted and frustrated, impacting every part of our lives. Matthew 6: 23-25 clearly indicates: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

How do you know when you're in debt, or worse – in financial bondage? Here's a logical explanation: you are in debt when you cannot make your monthly payments, when you cannot meet the needs (not wants) of your family and when your liabilities outweigh your assets.

Let's consider Ted's basic teachings on the different types of debt that we can hold:

1. Credit Card Debt

If you carry a balance month after month on your credit card, you are a victim of credit card debt, meaning you are spending more than you can pay when the bill comes in. Given that interest rates on some cards can be as high as 24%, this is scary debt and should be eliminated quickly.

2. Consumer Debt

If you borrow money to buy a car, furniture or other big-ticket items, you have incurred consumer debt. These items usually depreciate quickly, leaving you with more debt than the value of what you own.

3. Student Debt

This type of debt could be considered an investment, but since interest begins accumulating shortly after graduation, quick and systematic elimination of this debt should be a priority. These payments should not exceed 10% of your anticipated earnings, so planning prior to school or working through school is good stewardship.

4. Mortgage Debt

Almost all of us incur this type of debt at some point during our lifetime. Be cautious though with financial institutions approving significant levels of mortgage debt. Don't buy more house than you need or can afford (typically

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

you should borrow no more than twice your annual income) and keep the amortization term as short as possible.

Debt can be like a cancer that destroys you financially. If you find yourself over your head in debt, you must develop a plan to get out. Work with an advisor and be diligent in attacking this problem as a couple. It's important in a marriage that both spouses participate in the solution and it's even more important to be blatantly honest about the extent of your debt. Don't pile the bills unopened on top of the refrigerator! If you don't own the problem, you cannot solve it.

Credit card debt, since it is the most costly, should be dealt with first. Amalgamating it with your consumer loans and setting up a single monthly payment plan is usually effective if and only if you are not incurring new credit card debt.

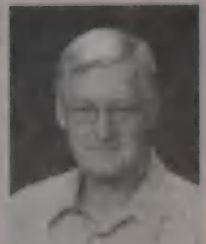
Restrict yourself to only one card for emergency use or cut up all the cards if you know you will be tempted. You may need to increase your income (a part-time job) for a while to make the payments but you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that the problem is being taken care of.

Stewardly Tip: keeping one credit card for emergency use or identification only is not always a bad idea. However, the easy access a credit card permits easily leads to over-use and you'll find yourself back in a bad situation. Here's a tip: place your credit card(s) in a non-glass container full of water and put it in the freezer. When you think you might need to use it, take it out to thaw. If you still feel you need to use it by the time you can get it out of the ice, then plan a way that ensures you can pay the credit card bill off at the end of the month. If you can't, put it back in the freezer. You'll save yourself a lot of grief.

Readers: Share your Stewardly Tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Body Stewardship

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Biblical wisdom

Enjoying life's goods is a gift of God

A.A. van Ruler

I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God. (KJV)

I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil – this is the gift of God. (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 3:12,13

The Preacher always faces life positively. That is to say, he expects something from life and insists that it is meant to be enjoyed. He conceives this in a very concrete sense. He doesn't just mean by it a mood, but definitely also an activity. What he has in mind is finding satisfaction in food and drink – enjoying good things. But these are only a couple of examples.

The issue isn't just food and drink. These are symbols of our ability to use all of created reality zestfully to our own well-being. Not that we need look with scorn on eating and drinking. They are basic functions of life that bring us into immediate contact with the "mystery" of the Creator's works. Eating and drinking sustain life, so they are also holy activities. Being able to enjoy a good meal and have it sustain your health is no small matter.

However, as we have said, eating and drinking are here used as specific examples of our general



Silver goblet by 18th century French master Jean Siméon Chardin

use and enjoyment of the world.

This is very typical of the positive way the Preacher looks on life: it involves enjoying yourself. And this self-enjoyment is not just a mood but a concrete activity. So it also involves taking delight in the world and in created reality. The Preacher stubbornly holds on to this idea: the world and life are only actually good when we can use them and enjoy them.

When we read the Bible and notice how often it speaks of joy, we are invariably tempted to interpret

it away. We seem inclined to think that we are not really intended to delight in the world and in life. We prefer to think that a person can (and may) only really take delight in God, eternity and heaven. The earth, then, isn't the object but only the context of our joy.

This is, I believe, a misconception on our part. The Bible nowhere suggests such a thing. We cannot, from the biblical viewpoint, have God without his world. We cannot, therefore, really delight in God unless we delight in his world. Similarly, we cannot have eternity without time; heaven without the earth.

The Preacher, it seems, takes another step in this same direction. He thinks man should be able to enjoy the good "in all his toil." By this he apparently means that the good man enjoys should lie in his toil, in his labor, in his occupation with the world.

To his mind, life is only meaningful and happy when the efforts of our labor yield something, bring something into being, when we derive something from the world that we can enjoy. Then the goods of the earth don't just happen. This makes us co-workers with God. We help to bring it into being ourselves. It is not simply a product of nature; it is also fully a matter of culture. Through this busyness, we attain the things in which we can rest.

At least, according to the Preacher, this is the way things should be. But this is not the way things are. Or in any case, they are by no means this way all the time. There are numerous people who toil all their lives with unflagging industry and diligence, yet never get around to really celebrating the sabbath and enjoying the fruits of their labor. "I have seen," says the Preacher, "that this is not within man's power."

A person has to be busily engaged. This is his calling and task. For most of us it is also an inescapable fate. It is, after all, also part of human nature. But we do not have the power also to enjoy it whenever we so wish.

There is, to the Preacher's way of thinking, something mysterious and irrational about this. Man is a worker, but he is still nothing more than God's co-worker. His doings are taken up into and included in the lofty and imposing doings of God. And God does what he pleases with the doings of man. There is, therefore, no rational line that runs from man's labor straight to the enjoyment of the fruits of that labor. This straight, rational line is interrupted by God's all-powerful freedom and good pleasure.

As a result, we cannot reason directly in a straight line from our own efforts to our just desserts.

We have to exert ourselves all our lives, but then we have to wait and

see what the Lord God gives us.

But he does acknowledge that some people really do enjoy life and take delight in it. They eat and drink. They enjoy the good things. So we cannot say that the Preacher is confronting us with a black pessimism. Life is a mixture. It is uncertain. For some things go one way; for others another. Seen aright, there is neither rhyme nor reason to it. There is really nothing rational about it. But here and there, now and then, we come upon something of the enjoyment of life that harks forward to Paradise.

This keeps the primal dream of happiness alive in the human breast. If we never and nowhere got a glimpse of this joy, we would begin to think that existence is nothing but a horror. No one, however, believes this. At least, not really. Moreover, the Bible agrees – being is good. It is better than non-being. Indeed, life and the world are meant to be enjoyed. A person should want to be happy. It is one of the fruits of a godly life.

But it is also one of the fruits of a godly life, of the fear of the Lord, that in dreaming of happiness we do not whine like children, that we do not try to force things in order to be happy at all costs.

We must respect the God's sovereign good pleasure. And we must also respect the deep mystery of the world and of life as they are.

When someone is truly joyful and able to enjoy the things of this world, it is a gift of God. And I believe we may insist that this, then, is the original gift that God intended to give to us. He does not always do so. A person may pass through valleys of deep unhappiness. This is somehow related to sin and, hence, to the wrath of God. Our sin and God's wrath are at the heart of the mystery of the world and of life.

But we can break through this mystery. We break through it when we say: "When a person enjoys the goods of life, then this is a gift of God."

We are not only allowed to say this; we should say this. For this is to take a stand at the heart of things. In the middle of all the darkness around us, we cling to this: that the light is really light, and that the light also really exists. Joy is the genuine light of life.

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Christian living

Letting go

Lynn Marie-Itnner Klammer

"He won't stop driving" said the pale young woman next to me. "We've told him and told him, but he's so stubborn."

I had heard these words before from family members of my patients. As a psychologist responsible for determining whether or not a patient was still competent to drive, I had many times been faced with the frustration of family members, and hostility of patients. The seventy-two year-old man sitting before me was just one of many faces I'd seen set in an angry frown as he denied his impairment. Clarence had suffered a stroke, and although able to return home the previous month, refused to accept that he was no longer able to do everything he once had.

"I told Dad that we could take him anywhere he wanted to go" said his son, sitting beside his father, "but he just goes on his own. There's no stopping him."

"I'm afraid he'll have an accident and hurt somebody" added the daughter-in-law.

As the months passed, and I continued to meet with Clarence and his family, I continued to stress the need for him to depend more upon his family, but it didn't work. Clarence was an old-fashioned farmer, used to being his own man and taking care of his own responsibilities. He couldn't let go of his independence, any more than he could let go of the steering wheel of his car.

After about six months, I met with Clarence and his family again. They had finally gotten Clarence to give up driving they told me triumphantly ... but there was another problem. Clarence had agreed to stop sneaking off with the car as long as he could still use the tractor. The son had agreed with his dad, right up until the time Clarence drove the tractor through the side of the barn.

It was finally agreed that Clarence would have to be watched even more closely, and denied access to all machinery. Shortly after this, Clarence passed away.

"He just gave up," said his son. "I could see how he just didn't care anymore."

Clarence had let go of his life easier than he could let go of his independence.

I thought Clarence, and others like him, were foolish ... until I myself (an admittedly independent and stubborn person) had to give up some of my own control. I had contracted a breast infection after the birth of my fourth child, and was literally "down and out." Like Clarence, I had to give up doing many things for myself that I had always done.

The period of dependency only lasted for a couple days, but it was enough to teach me an important lesson. I learned that Christian compassion goes both ways. It may be better to give than to receive, but it's certainly important to also allow others to give. My illness gave my family the rare opportunity to care for me as I have always cared for them. My ten-year-old son still talks about that special time (years ago now) when he was "needed" by Mommy.

I urge people with impairments to remember that there is no shame in accepting help from others. Helping each other is a critical part of being a Christian, and needing others as they need us is a part of that beautiful human connection that God has created for us. Clarence, like so many others in his position, couldn't understand that. He had the chance to give his son and daughter-in-law the gift of allowing them to love him through their help, but he threw that chance away. Instead, Clarence chose to give up, losing what could have been a wonderful future, and stealing from his family precious time with Dad.

Living with the loss of independence can be difficult, there is no doubt - but it is not all that matters. As with most things in life, it is what we do with life's trials, rather than the trials themselves, that determine our course. Impairments do not always have to mean loss, as Clarence's was for him. They can also be blessings in disguise (as mine was for my son and I). Sometimes life is about letting go ... of control, independence and stubborn pride ... but not of life.

Celebrating God's creation



The 35th Earth Day will be celebrated around the world on April 22, 2005. The day was started in 1970, a year that produced fibre optics, Paul Simon's eloquent "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and the last Beatles Album. Although I don't remember the 70's very well, I am thankful that each and every one of those three things were created because I use them all in my daily work.

A quick perusal of the Earth Day website (www.earthday.net) gives you an overview of the events, some historical background and some earth day facts. This year the theme is "Protect our Children and our Future." The facts are clear that asthma is claiming more new sufferers than ever and that chemical exposure is harmful to our children as well as us. The website posts material on moral behavior towards our earth, it speaks to our natural resources and biodiversity and gives tips on how to protect our planet. On the website one can also download a free Environmental Jeopardy game for your classroom and receive tips on how to "go organic." It is a lovely looking website that taught me a few things.

Not surprisingly, though, there is no mention of God.

It is good to have a specific day that focuses on the earth and reminds us what stewardship is about. Like many other households, ours continues to try to reuse, reduce and recycle. When we bought a car a few years ago, environmental standards were on the top of the list, and our recycling box outweighs our garbage any day of the week.

Like most people I despise when others litter and find my body temperature rise when I see someone throw something other than a banana peel out the window of a car. I sing "And they know we are Christians by our love, by our love..." over and over to myself before confronting someone who litters on the street.

Being environmentally friendly and Reformed can go hand in hand and was never displayed more clearly to me than when a man I knew named David was angry at God.

I met David several years ago. David is young, intelligent, friendly and easy to talk to. He loves a good joke and can tell them like a stand-up comedian. His openness and honest character endears him to many people, but he has small pockets when his

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra



anger gets the better of him. David wears his heart on his sleeve and is a continual searcher. He is constantly on the lookout for appropriate places to live, as he moves around a lot. He needs help from others to perform some daily tasks, craves good but has more acquaintances than he wants.

Often when lying in bed he wonders why he is here on this earth. He believes that when things go well, he did right. When things go wrong, however, he often says it is God's fault.

On one evening that we spent together, he told me that things had gone wrong and he was angry with God. He was angry with God and wondered why God would let things happen the way

they did. He then did something that I've never forgotten. He strode outside to the nearest garden, bent down, looked up to the heavens with a sneer on his face and pulled a flower out of the soil, tossing it on the ground to die.

With this simple act, David made a powerful Earth Day statement. He was essentially saying that our world belongs to God and that if God is going to let things happen to him, then he is prepared to ruin something of God's. David said that by symbolically pulling a flower out of a nearby garden. David's actions reminded me of what Earth Day should be about.

The Evangelical Environmental Network designated Sunday, April 24 as Creation Sunday 2005, suggesting as the theme: Protecting God's Endangered Creatures, citing Psalm 148:7, 10: "Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths... wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds..." Although April 24 was chosen, many churches observe some other Sunday as Creation Sunday.

The website of the Evangelical Environmental Network adds: "But God's other creatures cannot praise him if we extinguish them from the earth. The current rate of species extinctions is far greater than the natural rate - 100 to 1,000 times higher than it should be under natural conditions. Humans have been the main cause of extinction and continue to be the principle threat to God's creatures at risk of extinction. Habitat loss, the introduction of new species into ecosystems where they have not been before (so-called "exotic invasives"), over-exploitation, and pollution are the main threats, with human-induced climate change becoming an increasingly significant threat.

"Extinction isn't stewardship; it isn't creation-care. Extinct creatures cannot praise God."

The EEN website: <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/sunday/theme2005.php>, provides materials, resources, and suggestions related to the 2005 theme, including worship resources, suggestions for action, and a booklet about endangered species.

Mendelt D. Hoekstra is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, Ont. with Marisa and their two children.

War remembrance

War under the floor

This story, set in the last year of the German occupation of The Netherlands, during the so-called "hunger winter," was written shortly afterward by Sietze Jongsma. He was living in The Hague at the time, in his mid-30s, a father of three. This is the first of several parts, describing in vivid detail their struggle for survival as people starved to death waiting to be liberated by the stalled Allied offensive.

In a razzia, the Germans would set off one area of a city and go from house to house rounding up either Jews or workers to be shipped to labor camps. Even among the non-Jews, many never returned. In my translation, I've left out sections here and there.

HdN

Sietze Jongsma

November 21, 1944. It was the last day of the big razzia (round-up) in The Hague. We'd been living in nerve-racking suspense for several days already, for we'd been expecting this razzia. Exactly when it would take place, however, we had no idea. But on the evening of Nov. 20, we heard from a very reliable source that the krauts (moffen) were organizing a huge razzia.

We did everything possible to take the necessary precautions because we had no intention of playing into the hands of the krauts if we could help it.

At the time we were lucky to still have electric power so we still had the use of electric lights. This made it possible to realize our plans to go into hiding (onderduiken). The front room of our house on the Vailantlaan had a hatch in the floor under the tea cabinet. It was just big enough to crawl through.

Generally speaking, in the big cities there was about a half meter of crawl-space beneath the floor, providing quite a bit of room between the floor and the ground beneath. This made it possible for us to go into hiding under the floor of our house.

You can imagine that to stay in such a space for long was impossible, for you had to lie on the damp ground in a damp space. So I crawled under the floor on my belly to the rear wing of the house. Against the rear foundation, I dug a deeper space with a coal shovel so I could sit up. I also rigged up a small light so my hideout was a little cozier and with some strain I could even read a little.

Two neighborhood boys who lived in upper apartments were also looking for a place to hide. Since it was difficult to construct a hiding place on an upper story, we offered them the use of my hiding place as well. They eagerly accepted.

So we had to make the hole even larger to make room for three in our underground shelter.

On the evening of Nov. 20 the two young men joined us in our home. When there was



no sign of a razzia, however, we decided not to sleep under the floor that night but in bed. We moved the tea cabinet, lifted the linoleum and propped open the hatch. If there was any suspicious noise during the night, we planned to sound a quiet alarm and vanish into our hiding place. My wife would quickly close the hatch, replace the linoleum and push the tea cabinet on top.

That night, however, nothing happened. Everything remained still just like any other night. Early the next morning about 6:30, however, we were suddenly scared wide awake by the sound of a vehicle entering our street with a loudspeaker.

Since we had spent the night in bed with our clothes on, we were ready to go in no time at all. However, our curiosity got the better of us, so along with the rest of the family we first stood behind the front door to listen to what the German loudspeaker was saying.

It was the beginning of the big razzia.

The kraut announced that all men between 17 and 55 were to report to either the large hall in the zoo or at the Arts and Sciences building. Those refusing to report would be taken from there in an unpleasant manner and subject to severe punishment. To back this announcement up, the street was suddenly filled with German soldiers shooting their weapons in the air. Here and there they rang doorbells so as to cause as much fright and panic as possible.

In a flash the neighbor boys and I dove through the hatch and disappeared into our hiding place under the floor. We had no idea how long this affair would keep us there.

We had no choice but to calmly leave everything to him who rules over all things.

Through a similar hatch in the kitchen, my wife could keep us up to date with what was happening outside. Standing back from the front window a short ways, she had a good view of what was happening out in the street. Every now and then she would

tell us what she had seen and heard. Quite soon a number of men emerged to report. Some had no place to hide and some were too afraid to hide. Lying under the floor, we heard a lot of shooting.

A number of English planes had appeared over the city and were strafing various ships and barges lying ready in the harbor to transport the men who reported willingly and those who were seized. To no avail the razzia continued in full force.

You can imagine the fears that gripped us as we sat there under the floor, hearing all the shooting and bombardment without being able to see anything.

When at last it looked safe out in the street, my wife opened the hatch in the front room, and we crawled out to have a cup of tea and something to eat. And all three of us desperately needed a breath of fresh air. Our relief didn't last long, however, for soon we

heard the Germans returning and we ducked back into our hole.

In the afternoon the German soldiers and home guard began searching house to house in our street because the number of men who had reported voluntarily was very small. The suspense grew more intense every minute. My wife kept us informed about what was happening. Late in the afternoon, at dusk, they were up to our house. We heard the pounding of rifle butts on the floor next door. Although it hardly seemed possible, the suspense and fear straining our nerves increased.

Suddenly the sound of the electric doorbell rang through the hall. The Germans had arrived to search our house. But my wife delayed in answering the door. When she finally opened the front door, the Germans had already moved on next door, so as quietly as possible she closed the door again.

It wasn't long, however, before the doorbell rang once again. For the second time my wife followed the same course of action. After waiting some time, she opened the door a second time to discover that the Germans had vanished.

Later we found out that those searching in our street that afternoon were Austrians [who had been drafted into the German army]. They had been busy all night and had then become part of the big razzia, so they were dead tired and couldn't care less about the success of the razzia.

In the evening, when the greatest danger had passed, the three of us crawled out of our hole to get some air and to eat a little. But it was not yet safe to sleep in our beds that night. We decided to spend the night in our hiding place. To make it tolerable, we hauled a piece of canvas from a tent, an old piece of carpet and some old blankets under the floor and tried to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Returning to our



Razzia men being led off to work for Germany

Opinion

Mainly on Money

Only on money

Money is Power: Money isn't everything: Money makes a man: Money makes money: Money talks: Money doesn't talk: it swears.

Money. Money. Money. The Romans got into this act long ago with 'Pecunia non olet': money doesn't stink. That may have been the case 2000 years ago in Rome, but money is causing a real stink in Canada now.

The Gomery Inquiry is all about money. A curious law is unfolding there: The Law of Unintended Consequences. Chretien allocated \$250 million to ensure Quebec's allegiance. But this enormous sum has generated a political tsunami, drowning out the Liberal voting base and alienating Quebec.

Power corrupts. Money corrupts. When a forest is simply seen as timber, or a mountain as nothing but ore or coal, when seas are eaten, species erased, money is the force behind the destruction. The Bible is rather down on the stuff that now more and more dominates the world. It doesn't say that 'money is the root of all evil,' as an old hit tune had it decades ago. No, it says that "The lust of money is the root of all evil," because there's nothing wrong with money per se. It's still the most convenient means of exchange.

Yet, Jesus lost his cool about it when he upset the tables of the money changers in the Jerusalem Temple, even though these holy bankers performed a useful function. Somehow, in some way, money was abhorrent to Jesus. I think because he knew he was to be sold for 30 pieces of silver. The church rulers liked money however, and decided, right after Jesus' anti-capitalist action, to have him killed because his behavior upset their financial base.

Then, as now, 'successful' churches are conservative: there's where the money is. But Jesus, who could have chosen to be of any stature or condition,

chose to be poor. The English Poet, Christopher Harvey in the Seventeenth century said it well:

"It was thy Choice,
whilst thou on Earth didst stay
And hadst not whereupon
thy Head to lay."

It seems to me that Jesus recognized money as a competitive authority. I believe that he saw money as a secular embodiment of happiness, as a human creation and a dangerous rival, a counterforce to the kingdom he proclaimed.

Enough theology. Back to the realities of today, where the world today is inundated with rivers of money. Of course you would like to see a little trickle of it in your back yard. Who wouldn't? But that's not the kind of money the world floats on anymore. It's not even paper. It's computer figures, numbers that flit on the screens of the bankers, who create money out of nothing.

Out of nothing? Precisely. Each time the value of a property goes up, money is created, because on the strength of that increase you can get a loan.

Here's how you too can profit: get a recognized appraisal, the higher the better. You discover that your property value is up again. Your wealth has increased and you're richer by thousands of dollars. In this way millions of North Americans have cashed in on this bonanza and sucked out the equity in their homes.

Will they prove to be suckers when values decline? Everywhere in the Western World the brick and mortar of Real Estate is the new source of happiness. Cheap money and low interest rates have generated enormous wealth. General Electric (GE), manufacturer of everything electric, plus intricate jet and diesel engines, makes most of its money in financial related activities.

General Motors loses big on its auto division, but makes up for it through GMAC, its financial arm doing auto financing, consumer credit, insurance and property loans.

It is estimated that half of all the corporate profits in the USA comes from the financial sector. Scary. It's supposed to be a support industry.

There is a simple trick in the appraising world: Income divided by rate gives value. Here's how it works: the net income of a property is \$10,000. The capitalization rate is 4 percent. The value is \$250,000. Cheap money gives high value. In the USA mortgage interest is tax deductible. So you never pay off your mortgage: the bigger the property debt the less you pay of those accrued taxes. That too drives up property values.

Now suppose the money rate goes back to its 30 year average of 8 percent for a 30 year mortgage. Divide 8 percent into \$10,000 and the outcome is \$125,000. Suddenly a big loss, and inflation can cause that. It will cause rates to rise and values to drop.

With gasoline prices up, with all commodities – steel, coal, copper – skyrocketing, sooner than later we'll see higher interest rates and much, much lower real estate prices. Who will suffer? Those with large debts as well as those institutions who have given out all that paper money that proved to be as valuable as the figures on the computer screen – wiped out by a delete button.

Money can be the great destroyer.

The Gomery Inquiry is all about money. Will it destroy Canada as we know it? Will Money destroy itself?

It's true that monetary matters dominate the minds of many. That's the reason the stockmarket is a daily feature on television and in our daily newspapers. When the Dow goes up, people are delighted; dismayed when it drops, which has been the case recently.

The banking sector is now one of its largest components. While it employs only 6 percent of the workforce, it accounts for 20 percent of the Gross Domestic Product or GDP. Real Estate, excluding construction, comprises only 1.6 percent of total employment but accounts for 12 percent of GDP. Its building arm uses almost three times as many

people but is only 4.4 percent of GDP.

What this suggests is that jobs that create something tangible – houses, office towers, factories – are becoming less important, while positions for those who push keyboards, provide the money, write the offers, do appraisals, search titles and do the legal work, which create nothing but large fees, are gaining in value to the nation.

So, where will this all lead? We can't eat paper. We can't exist on computer-generated images. We can't eat money. We can't eat gold, either. I remember from the 1944-45 hunger winter in Holland that a golden wedding ring bought a loaf of bread.

In *Frozen Desire*, subtitled "An Inquiry into the Meaning of Money," James Buchan relates how the Spaniards in Peru in the beginning of the sixteenth century needed just two or three years to acquire gold ornaments that had taken the natives a thousand years to assemble. In order to teach the Spanish a cruel lesson, as their greed for gold was so great, the natives – who did not use this precious metal for money, only for decoration – once melted two pounds of gold and poured it down the throat of one of their captives, chanting "Here is gold, drink your fill, for here is enough to content even the most Covetous."

Basically money is the religion of modernity. Those rich in money are the high priests because they have realized what everybody wishes, while the poor are despised as flunkies, unable to attain the desired goal.

But life is more than money. Down the highway where I live there is a sign: "No farmers. No food. No Future." Growing potatoes, baking bread, producing eggs, having a roof over our head – these fill life's basic needs. All the rest is non-essential.

I remember that during the war I had to bike 10 kilometers over rough roads on solid strips of rubber made from auto tires, to get 2 litres of milk from a farmer who sold it illegally. It was all supposed to go to the German army. Life was pretty basic then. Money had little or no value.

Now for us in the city, and increasingly in the country as well, paper money provides for our entire existence. It is our soil, our sun, our water. Since 1950 the basis of most of our food has been

cheap and ample energy. Now Oil is Food. Running low on oil means running low on food, which will go to the highest bidder, foreshadowing future inflation.

For money to work, you have to believe in it. If you doubt it for a moment, it goes 'poof,' like smoke. During the depression in the 1930s Americans lost faith in money. People quit buying and borrowing and bankers stopped lending.

That's why the stock market plunged last week. Instead of a 0.8 percent increase in retail sales, there was only a 0.3 percent rise. Stamped into the American psyche is the drama of the Depression when the money cycle ceased. Since then shopping – having and spending money – has become the national religion: those billions of transactions every day in those stores full of imports and malls full of unnecessary stuff, express a deep desire, an ingrained urge, to prevent a Depression from re-occurring.

But come it may, and the cause will not be too little money, but too much. Too much debt. Take that infamous date: 9/11. It cost Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda no more than \$500,000 to destroy the World Trade Center. Since then the USA has been forced to spend \$500 billion in borrowed dollars to combat this threat. That is a ratio of \$1 million of USA money spent to \$1 of terrorist funds. Pretty poor odds, and highly inflationary.

In peace time money has a positive effect, building community, houses, gardens. In war time, money is used to destroy: fields littered with craters, sobbing wounded, productive lives lost, infrastructure eliminated, widespread pollution, cancer out of control, increasing poverty, global warming. All this causes immense financial liabilities, which, in turn, will result in high inflation. Ultimately money destroys life and land and people, and, in the end, money turns on itself. The Age of money is giving the world a great degree of instability. The danger is that, if money fails, civilization ceases as well.

Past columns can be seen at 'hielem.ca' Comments can be sent to Bert Hielema (bert@hielem.ca)



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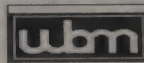
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Classified Rates	Birthday	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Anniversaries
<p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION : CC is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.</p> <p>RATES (GST added to all rates listed) All personal and family announcements: \$16.00 per column inch (P.L.) (2" wide) rose@christiancourier.ca</p> <p>Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: \$18.20 P.L. ads@christiancourier.ca</p> <p>PHOTOS: There is a processing fee of \$25 for a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.L. We need either an original photo or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS: The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$16 P.L. per insertion. All correspondence is forwarded unopened.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD</p> <p>Mail: Christian Courier, 1 Hiscott St St Catharines ON L2R 1C7 fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above</p>	<p>With great joy we, the children of</p> <p>Carl Tuyt</p> <p>invite you to join us in celebrating</p> <p>Dad's 80th Birthday.</p> <p>We are hosting an Open House on Saturday May 14, 2005 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the 1st Christian Reformed Church 63-67 Taunton Rd, Toronto</p> <p>Roasts and boasts welcome.</p> <p>Carl can be reached at 2 Southill Dr Toronto ON M3C 2H7</p> 	<p>Fruitland Orangeville 1955 May 20 2005</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to God</p> <p>TURNER AND JOAN ROORDA (nee Knegt)</p> <p>hope to celebrate our</p> <p>50th Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>with our children and grandchildren</p> <p>Family and friends are invited to an Open House on May 21, 2005 from 1-4 p.m. at the Chr. Ref. Church, 50 Blind Line, Orangeville</p> <p>Home address: 16 - 4th St #58 Orangeville ON L9W 4N7</p>	<p>1965 May 7 2005 Vancouver, B.C. Ottawa, Ont.</p> <p>As for me and my house, I will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15</p> <p>We give thanks to God for his faithfulness with</p> <p>JACK AND MARY DEKOK (nee Kwantes)</p> <p>on the occasion of their</p> <p>40th Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>on May 7, 2005</p> <p>David DeKok, Ottawa Alan & NaTasha DeKok, Ottawa Debora DeKok, Ottawa Brian & Caroline DeKok, Smiths Falls Brazen, Jade and Raine</p> <p>Home address: 1070 March Road Kanata ON K2K 1X7</p>	<p>60th Wedding Anniversary 1945 May 5 2005 Drenthe, Holland Brampton, Ont.</p> <p>The Lord willing</p> <p>BERT AND TIENA LUBBERTS</p> <p>will celebrate 60 years of marriage. We thank and praise God for the years he has blessed them with, and for the example they have been to us as a family. With much love and best wishes, Jane & Mark, Janie & Hank, John & Dianne, Tim, Mary & Hilbert, Ruth & Ralph, Rose & Fred, your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Mailing address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd S #109 HT Brampton ON L6Y 5A7</p>
Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Anniversaries
<p>Lollum May 6 Grimsby 1945 2005</p> <p>With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord for his faithfulness, we hope to celebrate D.V. the</p> <p>60th Wedding Anniversary of our parents grandparents and great-grandparents</p> <p>ART AND GERTIE WAGENAAR (nee Vander Sluis)</p> <p>It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless and keep them in his care.</p> <p>Love and best wishes.</p> <p>Joe & Dian Wagenaar Shane & Kim, Teresa & Sean - Kirs Rachel, Justin, Sara Ron & Jenny Wagenaar James & Melissa - Matthew, Abigail, Reuben, Samuel Dan & Alisha - Grace, Heather Dave & Barb - Alexandra Monica Keith & Ann Wielink Fred & Kathy Wagenaar Mark, Jesse, Ben, Josh</p> <p>Address: Apt#203 - 29 Robinson St N Grimsby ON L3M 3C9</p>	<p>1955 May 14 2005</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to God</p> <p>JOHN G. AND HENDRIKA HOFLAND (de Koning)</p> <p>hope to celebrate our</p> <p>50th Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>with our family:</p> <p>Joan & Bob Havenaar, <i>Carlisle, ON</i> Mary & George Venema, <i>Brampton, ON</i> Frank & Margaret Hofland, <i>Marietta, GA</i> Nancy & Ken Tamminga, <i>State College, PA</i> John & Linda Hofland, <i>Beamsville, ON</i> Glenn & Joan Hofland, <i>Georgetown, ON</i> Rodney & Alison Hofland, <i>Georgetown, ON</i></p> <p>21 grandchildren & 1 great-granddaughter</p> <p>Open House on May 29 in the Clearview CRC 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville after the 10:00 a.m. worship service.</p> <p>Home Address: 90-1405 Lorne Park Rd Mississauga ON L5H 3B2</p> <p>You are cordially invited to attend an</p> <p>Open House for</p> <p>WILLIAM AND TRUUS HOFLAND (nee Vander Loo)</p> <p>on the happy occasion of their</p> <p>50 Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>(May 14, 1955 to May 14, 2005)</p>	<p>May 10, 1923 April 13, 2005 Rys, Friesland Strathroy, Ontario</p> <p>With sorrow yet comfort we give thanks to God for the life of</p> <p>FRED (Freerk) ABMA</p> <p>who passed away at home after a courageous battle with cancer.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Alice (Alie) Abma</p> <p>Dear father and grandfather (Pake) to Andrew Abma, <i>Britannia Beach, BC</i> John & Mary Abma, <i>Bright's Grove, ON</i> Rachel, Bryan, Evan Janet & John Postma, <i>Red Deer, AB</i> Alissa, Jamie-Lea, Paul-Edward, Shariene Richard & Wendy Abma, <i>Calgary, AB</i> Nico, Karyn, Hannah, Luke, Marya Chris & Pete VanHove, <i>Surrey, BC</i> Joel, Sonya, Harmen, Curtis Mike & Shirlene Abma, <i>Grand Rapids, MI</i> Annalise, Aaron, Lydia George & Amanda Abma, <i>Strathroy, ON</i> Oliver, Chloe Sylvia & Gary Lammers, <i>Kitchener, ON</i> Richelle, Deanna, Janine Francine & Dennis Vink, <i>Calgary, AB</i> Nadia, Adam</p> <p>Brother to Johan Abma, Nienke Gorter, Fem Hoekstra, and Ruurd Abma</p> <p>Preceded in death by his sister Baukje Verhaaf</p> <p>Mailing address: Alie Abma, 14 Vine Ave Strathroy ON N7G 3V2</p>	<p>Obituaries</p> <p>Rijsburg, The Netherlands Alliston, Ontario January 15, 1904 March 25, 2005</p> <p>On Good Friday</p> <p>ADRIANUS MAARTEN DEN HAAN</p> <p>went home to meet his Saviour at the age of 101. Adrianus (Ed) was predeceased by his wife Maartje Rodenburg in 1987.</p> <p>His children: Gerri & Susan den Haan, <i>Alliston Ontario</i> Sam & Bonnie den Haan, <i>Red Deer Alberta</i> Ed & Willene den Haan, <i>Guelph Ontario</i> Marjorie Miedema (& the late Sam Miedema), <i>Alliston Ontario</i> Martin & Berta den Haan, <i>Abbotsford British Columbia</i> John & Bonnie den Haan, <i>Loretto Ontario</i></p> <p>Much loved Opa and Groot-Opa to 21 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren</p> <p>The Funeral Service took place on March 30, at the Alliston Christian Reformed Church.</p> <p>He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91:1</p> <p>Correspondence address: John den Haan, RR 2 Loretto ON L0G 1L0</p>	<p>Zwaartsluis, Netherlands Chatham, Ontario April 22, 1921 March 31, 2005</p> <p>We are deeply saddened to announce the passing away of our dad</p> <p>HARRY DE JONGE</p> <p>Harry was predeceased by his wife Grace in 1999</p> <p>He will be lovingly remembered by his children, grandchildren & great-grandchildren:</p> <p>Liz & John Vannoor, <i>St. Thomas</i> Clare & Lou De Jonge, <i>Chatham</i> Pete & Sher De Jonge, <i>Chatham</i> Harold & Barb De Jonge, <i>Brantford</i> Ed & Faye De Jonge, <i>Chatham</i> 19 grandchildren & 4 great-grandchildren</p> <p>"A father is someone who gives you the tools you need to build your life, the knowledge you need to use them effectively, the encouragement to overcome obstacles and the confidence to take pride in a job well done."</p> <p>Correspondence: Liz Vannoor, 595 Elm St St Thomas ON N5R 1K8</p>
<p>Ermelo St. Thomas, ON 1965 May 7 2005</p> <p>JACK AND HILDA DEVRIES (nee DeVries)</p> <p>If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139: 9,10</p> <p>With praise and thanks to the Lord, we hope to celebrate the</p> <p>40th Anniversary of our parents on May 7, 2005 D.V.</p> <p>We congratulate them and pray that God will continue to bless them richly.</p> <p>Monica & Jeff Ken & Debbie Esther, Hannah, Caleb & Joel Irene & James Nancy</p> <p>An Open House will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2005 from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the St. Thomas Community Christian School, 77 Fairview Avenue, St. Thomas, ON.</p> <p>Best wishes only please. Donations may be made to Rehoboth Home, Springfield, ON.</p> <p>Home address: 123 Forest Avenue, Apt. #3, St. Thomas, ON, N5R 2J8</p>	 <p>to be held at the St. Alban's Anglican Church in Beamsville (4341 Ontario Street) from 1:00 till 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 14, 2005. Best wishes only.</p> <p>Come and celebrate 50 years of God's love and faithfulness throughout their journey of life together.</p> <p>Correspondence: 3512 Heritage Lane Vineland ON L0R 1V0</p>	<p>May 14, 1935 April 3, 2005 Groningen, The Netherlands Oakville, Ontario</p> <p>THIJS EERKES</p> <p>Went home to be with his Lord on Sunday, April 3, 2005 at the age of 69 after a brief illness.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Corrie Eerkes (nee Kampinga)</p> <p>Loving father and grandfather of: Eppo & Judy Eerkes, <i>Jordan Station, Ontario</i> Sarah, Emily and Rebecca Frank & Elaine Eerkes, <i>Oakville, Ontario</i> John and James Eliza & Steve Folkerts, <i>Fonthill, Ontario</i> Katelynn, Jacob, Simon and Robyn John Paul Eerkes, <i>Oakville, Ontario</i></p> <p>Dear son of Epke Eerkes, <i>Edmonton, Alberta</i></p> <p>Thijs is survived by one sister and five brothers in Western Canada.</p> <p>Thijs loved his Lord, the church, his family and friends and his music. He will be deeply missed.</p> <p>Correspondence: Mrs. Corrie Eerkes 2078 Devon Road Oakville ON L6J 2N2</p> 	<p>May 1, 2005 3:00 p.m.</p> <p>DUTCH SERVICE will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.</p> 	

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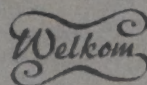
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The Director of Canadian Ministries (DCM) position requires the candidate to be theologically trained and to be an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC who has served as a pastor in at least one of the congregations of the denomination. The DCM will work from the Burlington, Ontario, office of the CRC and will need to be able to travel on an extensive basis.

To nominate individuals in writing or to confidentially apply for this position, send your resume and a letter of interest, by **July 1, 2005**, to the mailing or email address below.

To obtain more information about the position or the selection process, request an application packet, also by July 1, 2005, from the mailing or email address below.

Mr. Keith Oosthoek
Chair - CRC Search Committee
38 Hillcrest Lane
Kitchener Ontario N2K 1S8
CANADA

E-mail: kandjoosthoek@rogers.com

Additional information can be found on the CRCNA website at www.crcna.org.

Applicants will be considered until the Search Committee has made its selection of a nominee.

In keeping with the CRC Equal Opportunity Policy, persons who are members of a minority group or ethnic community are encouraged to apply.

Part-time Youth Ministry Coordinator

The Classical Youth Ministry Team (CYMT) of Eastern Canada has an opening for a 15 hour a week position. This person would work with individual congregation's youth ministries as a resource, leadership trainer, and educator of congregations in the area of youth ministry. The successful candidate would also help organize retreats for youth, training sessions for leaders, and overall raise the awareness of the importance of youth ministry classis wide.

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Please send resume to Chris Voskamp at

email: chris.voskamp052@sympatico.ca
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Direct enquires to:
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Christian Schools International and Christian Schools Canada

Fort McMurray Christian School, a growing interdenominational school in the oil sands capital of Canada, requires a teacher for a grade 3/4 class and a half time teacher with gifts in the area of assessment and remediation for the 2005 - 2006 school year. The applicant's teaching must be consistent with the school's mission statement. God's faithfulness has allowed our school to serve our community for 12 years. We presently offer kindergarten to grade 9 to 76 students with a staff of six teachers. Visit our website: www.fortmcmurraychristianschool.ca

Please send resume, a statement of faith and your philosophy of teaching to:

Tena Siebenga-Valstar
C/O Fort McMurray Christian School
190 Tamarack Way
Fort McMurray AB T9K 1A1
Fax: (780)743-1379
Email: fmcs_s@hotmail.com or tvalstar@telus.net

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Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or have teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Christian High School
22 Eagle Rd Lacombe AB T4L 1G7

E-mail - cach@telusplanet.net
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Ph: 403-782-4535
Website: www.cachs.ca



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(full-time, limited term)	(full-time, limited term)

Applicants should possess a Master's degree or Doctorate, and should be in agreement with the Reformed Christian basis of the University. Please consult www.redeemer.on.ca for more details.

Deadline: May 31, 2005 or when filled.

Direct applications and two reference letters to:

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens
Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College
777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4
Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: jellens@redeemer.on.ca

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. Redeemer University College is an equal opportunity employer.

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Milk & Honey

**Festival at
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May 30 to June 3.**

The "Stories of Life,
Stories for Life" theme
features lectures by
Dr. James Rusthoven
and

**Professor Johanna
Kuyvenhoven,**
Concerts and
excursions in the area.

For registration
contact the
Redeemer Box Office
877-779-0913
ext 4211

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line.

- May 1** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street, St. Thomas (Freewill offering) Info: (519) 637-4357
- May 1** Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.
- May 7** Liberation Choir 60th Anniversary Concert, with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 at Hamilton Place. Tickets: \$20, \$30, \$40. Available from choir members/ box office/ www.organs.ca
- May 11** CLASSIS HURON will meet D.V. in regular session on **May 11, 2005** in the New Life CRC of Guelph On., at 9:30 am. See ad below.
- May 30 - June 3** Milk & Honey Festival at Redeemer University College, Ancaster. The "Stories of Life, Stories for Life" theme features lectures by Dr. James Rusthoven and Professor Johanna Kuyvenhoven, concerts and excursions in the area. For registration contact the Redeemer Box Office 877-779-0913 ext 4211.
- June 8** Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m. at the Moorefield Community Centre. For more information call H. Rumph at 1-519-638-2053 or see May 16 issue.
- June 24-26** Christian Reformed Church of Kentville, Nova Scotia will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. For more details contact Gerrit Tenyenhuis, ph. 1-902-678-7641 or gtenyenhuis@nssympatico.ca or the church at 1-902-678-6293 or fax 1-902-679-5230. Email: kentvillecrrc@ns.sympatico.ca
- July 1-3** Nobleford CRC 100 year anniversary celebrations with picnic, banquet and services. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konyonenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net
- July 8-10** Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. For information, contact the church office at 902-894-4721 or email: chtowncrrc@pei.aibn.com.

CLASSIS HURON

will meet D.V. in regular session on **May 11, 2005** in the New Life CRC of Guelph Ont. at 9:30 a.m.

All materials for the printed Agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk of Classis no later than April 6, 2005.

Stated clerk:

Rev. Ed Den Haan
56 Walman Dr
Guelph ON N1G 4G8

email:

edenhaan@sympatico.ca
Phone 519-824- 4524

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REV. ED DEN HAAN

after serving as campus minister at University of Guelph
for 27 years.

The reception and evening dinner will take place at
First Christian Reformed Church,
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on Saturday, June 4, 2005

Punch reception 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Authentic Chinese dinner
(prepared by the Chinese Fellowship) at 6 p.m.

Tickets for the dinner are \$15 each and include a gift to the
continuing work of Huron Campus Ministry - Guelph. To
reserve tickets, call the church office at 519 822-7720

News

Rick Warren, at 25-year point, launches global initiative

Mark Kelly

ANAHEIM, Calif. (BP)—Thousands of churches around the world will be setting out to eradicate five "giant problems" that oppress billions of people, Rick Warren told a crowd of 30,000 celebrating Saddleback Valley Community Church's 25th anniversary April 17 at Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif.

"Billions of people suffer each day from problems so big no government can solve them," said Warren, Saddleback's pastor. "The only thing big enough to solve the problems of spiritual emptiness, selfish leadership, poverty, disease and ignorance is the network of millions of churches all around the world."

Saddleback Church celebrated its 25th anniversary by combining the congregation's usual six weekend services into a single gathering at the stadium south of Los Angeles. It was the first time in many years members of the church family had been able to assemble at the same time. The event included greetings to the congregation from President George Bush and evangelist Billy Graham and featured music from Michael W. Smith, Salvador and Tait.

Warren used the occasion to announce his vision of a spiritual awakening that would sweep the world as Christian churches tackle the problems that Jesus himself confronted during his ministry.

"The Scripture shows us that Jesus shared the Good News, trained leaders, helped the poor, cared for the sick and taught the children," Warren said. "Our P.E.A.C.E. plan will just do the five things Jesus did while he was here on earth."

P.E.A.C.E. is an acronym that stands for "Plant churches, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick and Educate the next generation," Warren said. The emphasis calls for church-based small groups to adopt villages where spiritual emptiness, selfish leadership, poverty, disease and ignorance keep people from experiencing the kind of life God wants them to have, he said.

"There are thousands of villages in the world that have no school, no clinic, no business, no government — but they have a church," Warren said. "What would happen if we could mobilize churches to address those five global giants?"

Warren's "Purpose Driven" movement will be the vehicle for launching such an effort. A combined 23 million copies of his books — *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life* — have been sold, and more than 400,000 pastors in 162 countries have been trained in the "church health" principles that took Saddleback from seven people to more than 20,000 members in 25 years. Warren's approach organizes congregations into small groups that focus on the five biblical purposes of the church:



Rick Warren

worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism.

Saddleback's network of 2,600 small groups is starting the movement as each one adopts a village where it will seek to implement the P.E.A.C.E. plan. The congregation, based in Lake Forest, Calif., has been testing the plan over the past 18 months as 4,500 church members have been involved in pilot projects.

The official rollout of P.E.A.C.E. will focus on the small country of Rwanda in eastern Africa, where a million people were killed in a 100-day genocide in 1994. A recent visit to the country convinced Warren that Rwanda had the right qualities for what he called "the first model of national cooperation" between churches and a country's leaders.

Warren said he was impressed with the spiritual depth of Rwandan church leaders who opposed the genocide and have led the people into a "spirit of hope and reconciliation." He also said he believes God wants to begin something new in a small country that the world ignores.

Warren then introduced President Paul Kagame as a "wonderful Christian leader" who has demonstrated his trustworthiness in rebuilding the country.

Kagame praised the P.E.A.C.E. plan as "a vision with a big goal . . . but one that also is simple in the strategy it proposes." He announced that 16 leaders of Rwanda's key Christian groups would visit Saddleback in May to discuss the details of launching P.E.A.C.E. in the country.

"Each partner — church, government, business, education — has a role to play, and we are more effective when we cooperate," Kagame said. "Rwanda is emerging from a difficult time. Together, we will learn from each other and create a future of P.E.A.C.E."

The P.E.A.C.E. plan will be a "revolution" for global Christianity, Warren told the congregation.

"I stand before you confidently right now and say to you that God is going to use you to change the world," Warren said.

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News briefs

Good news for those of us who have been feeling guilty about not taking our vitamin E supplements. A recent study suggests they do not prevent disease. In fact, they may even accelerate the recurrence of cancer in some.

In the trial, people who took vitamin E developed cancer as often as those in the control group, but secondary cancers appeared earlier.

Conclusion: an apple a day is more effective in cancer prevention. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables is a better way to get the anti-oxidants that prevent cancer.

The number of cancer cases in Canada continues to rise at a faster pace than population growth, says the Canadian Cancer Society. It warns that the country is facing a cancer-care crisis unless more focus is put on prevention. Approximately 50 percent of cancers are estimated to be preventable. The Cancer Society is urging government action.

An apple subsidy perhaps? No, more advertising. Oh-oh, remember what happened the last time the government put a lot of money into advertising? Rotten apples, said Chretien.

Drug costs in Canada are growing faster than any other area of health spending, with the national bill for everything from heart pills to headache remedies reaching nearly \$22 billion last year — 3 1/2 times what it was 20 years ago. According to the latest report, prescription drugs spending is growing at an annual rate of 10 percent above inflation. The main reasons are an ageing population and newer, costlier drugs.

Health Canada statistics suggest up to 16,500 elderly patients have died due to suspected drug reactions in the last five years. Older people are more vulnerable to drug reactions, partly because they use more drugs and in a variety of combinations, because they have more ailments.

The good news is that it's costing them more to finish us off.

Can't sleep at night? A new study show that older adults with insomnia sleep better and longer if they play tapes of peaceful music just before turning in. And unlike sleeping pills, music has no side effects. Older studies show that Mozart also increases intelligence, so Mozart may be a better choice at night than *Nightline* or *Jay Leno*.

The study concluded: "The music group reported a 26% overall improvement in the first week and this figure continued to rise as they mastered the technique." Falling asleep to music is a technique that requires mastery? Maybe you can get a diploma in sleep technique.

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